

THE RIDDLE OF THE WORLD

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THE RIDDLE OF THE WORLD

by

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The Faith That Rebels

WITH A PREFACE BY

ROBERT E. SPEER



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PREFACE

TO THE AMERICAN EDITION

THIS VOLUME is another masterly contribution to the thinking of our day by one of our ablest Christian teachers. Dr. Cairns has been for a quarter of a century Principal of the Theological College in Aberdeen, associated first with the Free Church and now with the United Church of Scotland. His previous books have been recognized around the world as among the freshest and most courageous attempts of our time to meet the problems which confront Christianity in the modern world. The first of these was composed of some remarkable essays contributed to the *Contemporary Review* and published as a book under the title *Christianity and the Modern World*. A second book entitled *The Reasonableness of Christianity* was a clear and convincing presentation of the Christian case to the student mind, which no one understood better than Dr. Cairns. A third volume dealt with *The Church and the War*. A fourth book entitled *A Faith That Rebels* is the best treatment which we have of the problem of the miracles of Christianity, and is a fearless avowal of faith in the supernatural character of the Christian origins and in the authenticity of the miracles of Jesus.

In *The Riddle of the World* Dr. Cairns deals with the issues which have been for a generation the great issues of philosophy and religion, and especially of the Christian faith. And we have here a thoroughgoing setting forth of the theistic as

PREFACE

against the materialistic view of the world, of the spiritual as against the secular view of history and the life of man, and of Christian supernaturalism as against naturalistic or semi-naturalistic humanism. Especially do we have here as fine a presentation as one knows of the problem of freedom and of the mystery of evil. And the steadiness and freshness of Dr. Cairns' thought is matched by the clarity and charm and vigor of his spirit. And all this is from one who thoroughly understands and sympathizes with the modern mind, who knows it through and through, and who is not sitting in judgment upon it but who is seeking constructively and appreciatively to guide it into the fulness of truth.

It is a pleasure and a privilege to commend so great a book of so dear a friend to the Churches of our country, and especially to teachers and students who are facing the issues of contemporary thought in this time of transition, when the mechanistic or humanistic views which have been so nearly dominant are manifestly giving way before a resurgence of faith in a living God and a spiritual view of the world and of life and destiny.

ROBERT E. SPEER.

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THE RIDDLE OF THE WORLD

I

THE HUMAN SITUATION

THERE are many people in the world to-day who have abandoned the Christian revelation because they have found it, for one reason or another, too difficult to believe. The initial question I should wish to raise with them is whether they have really got rid of difficulty by such abandonment. To me it seems that they are now face to face with the radical mystery of human existence, the formidable riddle of the world.

The word Revelation means the taking away of a veil—the veil which, as Isaiah said, “lies on the face of all peoples”—it therefore implies the existence of that radical mystery. If there be a revelation, it must contain the solution of that mystery, the disclosure of reason and meaning in what, without it, is sheer confusion. Rejection of revelation, therefore, does not mean that we escape from intellectual difficulties. It only means that the supposed solution given by revelation being rejected, we come once more right up against the ancient menacing Darkness. But if this solution be true, revelation itself can only be deeply understood by those who have clearly discerned the underlying riddle of the world, in which is included the mystery of our own personalities. If they have never really seen and felt the pressure of that mystery not only on the

intelligence, but on the soul of mankind, they will inevitably see the revelation in a false perspective. Perhaps if it were discerned in its true context the difficulties would diminish and, it may even be, disappear.

But whether this be so or not, the courses of human thought to-day are compelling all serious minds to consider afresh the ancient riddle of the world. To-day we see it in terms of the modern scientific view of Nature, but in truth it is as old as man himself. In all ages it inheres in the very substance of man's nature and in the human situation. What is that riddle? It arises from the fact that man knows himself to be a higher being than any thing or any number or organisation of things in Nature, and yet comes out of, is entangled in, dominated by, and eventually destroyed by Nature.¹ He knows also that there is a deep division in himself between what is and what ought to be. The full and conscious recognition of the mystery of the world, at least is recent, but the truth is that man has never felt himself at home in the nature world, has always been protesting to what he has persistently believed to be over Nature, and has been restlessly trying to explain to himself how he came to be there in the human situation. He has been deeply convinced in his own mind that the world has no right to dominate and destroy him, that the unseen world in which he believes, and to which he makes his protest and appeal, is mightier than the empirical world of the senses in which he is entangled, and

¹ By Nature I mean the universe as we know it, through our senses, and explore it by the scientific method.

that this over-world or "Supernatural" is either friendly or may be made friendly to him, and thus he is constantly seeking its alliance and succour. That, explain it how we may, is a plain undeniable fact of history. The Science of Religion has, I believe, demonstrated once for all the nature and the universality of religion. As regards its nature let us hear one or two authorities. "By religion," says Sir J. Frazer, "I understand a propitiation or conciliation of powers superior to man, which are believed to direct and control the course of nature and human life."¹ "Religion," says Professor Menzies, "is a worship of higher powers from a sense of need."² "Sabatier's view is that religion is essentially a "prayer" for life."³

As regards its universality there is practical unanimity. "A people without a religion," says one of our foremost anthropologists, Dr Marett, "is a chimera." Another great savant in the Science of Religion has also said, "The affirmation that there were peoples or tribes without a religion has hitherto always shown itself to be based on inaccurate observations or confusions of ideas. A tribe or nation which possessed no sacred rites or believed in no higher powers has never been discovered, and assertions of that kind made by travellers have always sooner or later been confuted by the facts. We have therefore the right to say that religion, if we apply this word to primitive sacred rites, is a universal human phenomenon."⁴

Further, simple inspection of the immense area

¹ Frazer's *Golden Bough*, vol. i, p. 50.

² *History of Religion*, p. 11.

³ *Esquisse d'une Philosophie de la Religion*, chap. I, secs. 2 and 3.

⁴ Tiele-Söderblom, *Kompendium der Religionsgeschichte*, 5th Ed., p. 18.

of our present-day knowledge of the religions of mankind should convince every open-minded observer that all religions always contain these four elements: faith in the powerful unseen world; obligation to it; the appeal to it for help against the destroying forces in the world around us; and some conception of the good that one seeks to gain by that obedience and appeal. Nearly all, if not all religions also contain some endeavour by myth, legend or tradition, to explain man's strange position. When we reflect on these things we see that they all have their root in one common and ineradicable conviction that man is not at home in the actual world. The same conviction and the sense that here there is an acute problem for the intelligence is also behind what has been called "the great tradition" in philosophy. Whether we profess Idealism or Realism, it can hardly be questioned that the former has most of the great names in philosophy on its side, whether we consider Indian thought as expounded by the philosophy of the Vedanta, or Greek as represented by Plato and his successors, or German as represented by Kant and Hegel. It is all dominated by the conviction that there is that in man which cannot be explained in terms of the actual, and which is higher than the actual. It has fixed upon this element as the all-important thing for determining our conception of Nature as well as personality, and has sought for that in the Unseen which could alone solve the riddle for the intellect and give man the power not only to explain, but to overcome the world. "Philosophy," said Novalis, "is a kind of home-sickness," and that pregnant saying has

been expanded by a recent philosophical writer¹ as follows : "There is a deep-seated need in the human mind, the roots of which strike far beneath all other needs and interests. This is need to feel at home in the universe. From this source spring all philosophies and all religions, though it is only in the most highly developed philosophies and religions that we have become effectively conscious of this need and of what it demands for its satisfaction. It is a need which at once demands to understand the universe and to love it. It wants at once truth and perfection. It wants what men mean when they say 'God.'" Now in what way did the religions of mankind meet this fundamental need of man ? How did they help him to solve the mystery of his being ? By assuring him that the supreme powers were on his side, and, if he were faithful to them, would see him through. His faiths thus made him free of a larger world in which he could be at home, which was not fundamentally alien to his highest values, but friendly to him and them, and which, in however imperfect a way, had meaning and purpose in it. To a certain extent these faiths thus for him solved the fundamental problem of his life, or at least lightened its mystery so that he could do his work in the world, by giving him a religious interpretation of life, which, however imperfect it might be, assured him of the one vital thing, that his supreme values were supported by supreme Reality.

But to-day, not only the non-Christian religions of India, China and Japan, but the Christian faith itself, are confronted by a new interpretation of the

¹ Hoernle : quoted by Burt, *Religion and Science*, p. 102.

world. The story of the discovery and development of the scientific method and of its amazing achievements is admitted by all to be one of the most important events in human history. It was discovered that by putting aside the time-honoured traditions of religious and philosophic thought, which by the consent of the ages men had used to help out their imperfect knowledge of Nature, and by, as it were, making a fresh start with the simple phenomena of Nature itself, it was possible by the application and refinement of ordinary common-sense ways of thinking, to give such a clear and orderly account of the world as would enable men at once to *describe* it as a whole, as a system of natural law, and what was of enormous practical importance, to *predict* to a very large extent what, given certain conditions, Nature would do next. This last discovery gave men the wonderful new powers over Nature which in the past three centuries have effected such far-reaching consequences in the whole life of mankind. These practical consequences and its own inherent grandeur have given to the scientific description of Nature an extraordinary prestige in the minds of all modern men. Just as in the Middle Ages the synthesis of all knowledge framed by Thomas Aquinas and the schoolmen dominated the scene and formed the background of poems such as the *Divina Commedia*, and paintings like the "Last Judgment" of Michelangelo and the "Madonna di San Sisto" of Raphael, so the scientific cosmogony was the background of later Victorian thought and art. Of the unexpected changes that have taken place in that scientific

world-view I shall speak later. But it is still the case that with the ordinary cultivated man the scientific view has the dominant place, although he is no longer able to make clear sense of it, and there are many in whose minds there still remains the conviction that in the scientific method alone lies our one hope of interpreting the cosmos. For them the old triad of religious thought, God, the world and the soul of man, no longer exists. God has disappeared as the world of Nature can be explained without Him, and man has been merged in Nature. This is the creed of Naturalism, which is to-day widely spread everywhere. It is to be carefully distinguished from the scientific view of the world. We shall see later in more detail what that scientific view of the world is. It is enough to say, at the present point of our argument, that the scientific account represents a certain abstract way of handling reality which by its very nature must be incomplete, but which so far as it goes has proved extraordinarily impressive and useful. Naturalism is a form of philosophy which insists that science is the only true way of describing reality, and that when completed it will tell us the final truth about the universe. Naturalism is not to be identified with the older Materialism which thought it could explain the universe in terms of an inconceivably large number of inconceivably small spherical bodies which were vehicles of energy. While this Materialism is dead Naturalism is still very much alive. Under the term of Naturalism I include every form of philosophy which believes that in the last resort the basis of all things is physical, whether that

basis be conceived of as matter or as physical energy, or a configuration of space-time.

Now, one of the results of the scientific movement has been that Nature stands out as a whole with a distinctness that it has never had before. In the Bible there is, I think, no mention of Nature as a self-enclosed system at all. The Bible is dominated by the thought of God, Nature's great agencies being regarded as His servants and instruments: "Who maketh the winds His messengers, His ministers a flame of fire." But science as such has eliminated all explanation of natural processes that take us outside Nature herself. This was in itself a legitimate course to take, for it is the business of science to let the phenomena it investigates make their own impression, and not to dictate to them what they must say, until it becomes quite obvious that they cannot explain themselves. This is one of the abstractions which, as we shall see, characterise the scientific method. Naturalism, however, has taken this good working rule of science and transfigured it into the dogma, "There is nothing but Nature." But, having done this, it has during the period that has followed the time of its ascendancy found itself involved in ever-growing difficulties. Is it, after all, really possible to explain man as simply a part of Nature? A very large part of the scientific work of the latter part of the nineteenth century was given to showing that man was continuous with the rest of Nature, that in his bodily structure he could only be explained as one of the stock of the primates, and that there was an unbroken chain of evolution connecting him with animal forms of an even lowlier type. As this process continued

science seemed to be substantiating the claims of Naturalism. The process of applying the ideas of evolution was carried not only back from the first beginnings of man, but forward down his history, and an impressive and comprehensive endeavour was made by the sciences of anthropology, sociology and comparative religion to show the development of his moral, intellectual and religious life on thoroughgoing naturalistic lines of explanation. The case for Naturalism, that is to say for the view that man is simply one of the higher animals and therefore a part of Nature, rests on two bases: the validity of the principles of scientific investigation, and the adequacy of the purely scientific account of Nature to explain all the complex phenomena of human life. Later on we shall examine both of these foundations more thoroughly. Meantime I would repeat that the result of all the labours of science has simply been to disclose with luminous distinctness what has all along been present to the prophets of religion and the sages of philosophy in less distinct form: Nature seems to have produced in man a being higher than herself, and having brought him into being, she seems to be at once seeking to nurture him and to destroy him. We may add to this fundamental paradox the further statement that, so far as our scientific knowledge goes, Nature will in the end obliterate the whole human race, and the whole result of human life and thought will be as if they had never been.

Now the nerve of this paradox lies in the word "higher." If it did not come into the matter we should simply have a meaningless picture of intricate

change, of shapes emerging from formlessness, becoming more definite and complicated, and then being resolved into their elements again, a kind of shifting cloud-rack, slowly forming into patterns and then dissolving again. If that were all, we might find such a world of kaleidoscopic change at first strange and then wearisome to watch. But the word "higher" disturbs and excites, and then distresses us. For it implies that, after all, something worth while is going on, something worthy of existing is being made, and that quite inevitably suggests some purpose and meaning behind it all. And when that is once glimpsed it becomes intolerably shocking and painful to see it extinguished. Is the purpose behind all malignant? But, if so, how did it come to produce anything so noble, so worthy to live on? Here in germ is the old riddle of the world returning on our hands.

Plainly this word "higher" as applied to man requires further investigation. Is man really higher than the world of things, than stones and clouds, or than animals, a snake or a lion? Or is this simply a human illusion by which certain poets, not usually of the first magnitude, ascribe human emotions to Nature? When we say that a man is "higher" than a "thing" what do we mean? Do we mean that he is really higher, that we simply recognise it, and that that is all there is to be said about it? Do we mean, to be concrete, that Jesus was really higher than Judas, and would in Himself have been higher though there was no human being there to acknowledge it? Or is there only a subjective and relative value that is here expressed? Are all judgments of good

and evil, of despicable and noble men and women, simply advantageous racial illusions, which, as men progress in knowledge of actual reality and become more absolutely wedded to the facts, they will come to see through? What is at least perfectly clear is, that when they are not sophisticating themselves, men and women of Western civilisation believe that they can recognise real objective differences, and unhesitatingly accept this judgment of men and things as objectively true and valid. I can think of no audience, for example, in Western civilisation, at least, that would fail to respond at once to two propositions when set before them by any speaker capable of making the issue plain. First, that it is the duty of every civilised government to exploit to the uttermost for the benefit of the citizens of its country all its available natural resources, its pastures, its arable land, its mines and fisheries, its flocks and herds. In the case of its flocks the exploitation, it would be recognised, must be done with humanity. But done it must be, all the same.

The second proposition that would, I think, be recognised everywhere with a like spontaneous agreement would be that it would be infamous so to exploit men. To do so, all men and women of intelligence and goodwill would say, was not purely imprudent, but *wrong*. It is no doubt true that governments as well as individuals often do exploit human beings, but they are always careful to disguise the fact, and when they are accused of it, there is an immediate uproar. No government that openly professed the exploitation of human beings as one of its principles of action could live

in any decent commonwealth for a month. Most men and women of intelligence and goodwill, moreover, would say without hesitation that the whole progress of mankind depended on an ever-deepening recognition of the worth and sacredness of human beings as such; depended, that is to say, on our discovering and realising what was there in human beings whether we recognised it or not, and so becoming aware of a reality to which before we were blind. The more we recognise the worth and sacredness of human beings the more difficult does it become to explain how they should ever have been produced by mere indifferent Nature, and why Nature which has produced them should so ruthlessly obliterate them all. In other words, the more society advances in moral quality and distinction the sharper must become the riddle of the world. The more society tends to fall backward towards the brutish level the more will the riddle of the world tend to disappear. As I have already said, this problem is what lies behind all the greater philosophies of the world.

The past century has been distinguished beyond all others by the triumphant march of science. Almost within human memory we have seen region after region of new knowledge annexed and occupied by the triumphant armies of science. Never has man's knowledge of the actual empirical world and his power over it grown with greater rapidity. Yet here is the paradox. The more he has known it the greater, apparently, has become his perplexity and distress, and the more acute the riddle of the world. The period that has been so fruitful in scientific achievement has seen a succession of

impeachments of Nature by leaders of our modern *intelligentsia*, that show how little the ancient problem has been advanced by all the advances of science, and how poignant is their distress. I shall make no apology for quoting at some length from these writers, for I believe they are expressing the perplexity of their age and laying bare the real problem.

Let us first of all hear John Stuart Mill, whom Mr Gladstone called "the saint of rationalism":

"In sober truth, nearly all the things which men are hanged or imprisoned for doing to one another, are Nature's everyday performances. Killing, the most criminal act recognised by human law, Nature does once to every being that lives; and in a large proportion of cases, after protracted tortures such as only the greatest monsters whom we read of ever purposely inflicted on their living fellow creatures. . . . This Nature does with the most supercilious disregard both of mercy and of justice, emptying her shafts upon the best and noblest indifferently with the meanest and worst, upon those who are engaged in the highest and worthiest enterprises, and often as the direct consequences of the noblest acts, and it might almost be imagined as a punishment for them. She mows down those on whose existence hangs the well-being of a whole people, perhaps the prospects of the human race for generations to come, with as little compunction as those whose death is a relief to themselves or a blessing to those under their noxious influence. Such are Nature's dealings with life. . . . Next to taking life is taking the means by which we live, and Nature does this, too, on the largest scale with the most

callous indifference. A single hurricane destroys the hopes of a season ; a flight of locusts or an inundation desolates a district ; a trifling chemical change in an edible root starves a million of people. . . . Even the love of order which is thought to be a following of the ways of Nature is in fact a contradiction of them. All which people are accustomed to imprecate as disorder and its consequences is precisely part of Nature's ways. Anarchy and the reign of terror are overmatched in injustice, ruin and death, by a hurricane and a pestilence.”¹

Now let us hear T. H. Huxley. Writing towards the close of his strenuous career in the famous Romanes Lecture the palinode which caused so much dismay in the ranks of his fellow Darwinists of the heroic age, Huxley speaks thus of the cosmic process :

“ If there is a generalisation from the facts of human life which has the assent of thoughtful men in every age and country, it is that the violater of ethical rules constantly escapes the punishment which he deserves. . . . Greek and Semite and Indian are agreed upon this subject. The Book of Job is at one with the *Works and Days* and the Buddhist Sutras ; the Psalmist and the Preacher of Israel with the Tragic Poets of Greece. What is a more common motive of the ancient tragedy, in fact, than the unfathomable injustice of the nature of things ; what is more deeply felt to be true than its presentation of the destruction of the blameless by the work of his own hands, or by the fatal operation of the sin of others ? . . . Thus, brought before the tribunal of ethics, the cosmos might well

¹ J. S. Mill, *Three Essays* (Nature), pp. 28-31.

seem to stand condemned. The conscience of man revolted against the moral indifference of Nature, and the microcosmic atom should have found the illimitable macrocosm guilty. But few, or none, ventured to record that verdict. . . . Let us understand, once for all, that the ethical progress of society depends, not on imitating the cosmic process, still less in running away from it, but in combating it. It may seem an audacious proposal thus to put the microcosm against the macrocosm and to set man to subdue nature to his higher ends ; but I venture to think that the great intellectual difference between the ancient times with which we have been occupied and our day, lies in the solid foundation we have acquired for the hope that such an enterprise may meet with a certain measure of success."

I take next a characteristic passage from William James's *The Will to Believe* (1896). There is less poignancy in this passage with all its vividness, for James did not really believe that Nature said the last word about the universe, and he did believe in God, though, as he has told us in his letters, rather on the witness of others than from his own direct communion with Him :

"Now, I do not hesitate frankly and sincerely to confess to you that this real and genuine discord (namely between the ideals of the spirit and the facts of nature) seems to me to carry with it the inevitable bankruptcy of natural religion, naïvely and simply taken. There were times when Leibnizes with their heads buried in monstrous wigs could compose Theodicies, and when stall-fed officials of an established church could prove by

the valves in the heart and the round ligament of the hip-joint the existence of a 'Moral and Intelligent Contriver of the World.' But those times are past, and we of the nineteenth century, with our evolutionary theories and our mechanical philosophies, already know nature too impartially and too well to worship unreservedly any God of whose character she can be an adequate expression. Truly, all we know of good and duty proceeds from nature; but none the less so all we know of evil. Visible nature is all plasticity and indifference—a moral multiverse, as one might call it, and not a moral universe. To such a harlot we owe no allegiance; with her as a whole we can establish no moral communion; and we are free in our dealings with her several parts to obey or destroy, and to follow no law but that of prudence in coming to terms with such of her particular features as will help us to our private ends. If there be a divine Spirit of the universe, nature, such as we know her, cannot possibly be its *ultimate word* to man. Either there is no Spirit revealed there; and (as all the higher religions have assumed) what we call visible nature, or *this* world, must be but a veil and surface-show whose full meaning resides in a supplementary unseen or *other* world."

We come now to Bertrand Russell, in whom the note of poignancy returns. In what is by far the most quoted of any passage of his writings he expresses his moral disdain of Nature. After a grim parable of a Divine dramatist who creates Nature and human life as a spectacle for His æsthetic enjoyment, he closes it by saying: "And God smiled, and when he saw that man had become

perfect in renunciation and worship, he sent another sun which crashed into man's sun ; and all returned again to nebula. 'Yes,' he murmured, 'it was a good play ; I will have it performed again.' " He then continues :

"Such in outline, but even more purposeless, more void of meaning is the world which science presents for our belief. Amid such a world, if anywhere, our ideals henceforward must find a home. That man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end which they were achieving, that his origin, his growth, his hopes and his fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms, that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling can preserve an individual life beyond the grave ; but that all the labours of all the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruin—all these things, if not quite beyond dispute are yet so nearly certain that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundations of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation be safely built."

Such is man's lot. Now notice the terms in which the writer refers to Nature : "How in such an alien and inhuman world can so powerless a creature as man preserve his aspirations untarnished ? A strange mystery it is that Nature, omnipotent but blind, in the revolutions of her

secular hurrying through space, has brought forth a child, subject still to her power, but gifted with sight and knowledge of good, with the capacity of judging all the works of his unthinking mother. In spite of Death the mark and seal of the parental control, man is yet free, during his brief years, to examine, to criticise, to know, and in imagination to create. To him alone in the world with which he is acquainted, this freedom belongs; and in this lies his superiority to the resistless forces that control his outward life. . . . But the world of facts is, after all, not good; and in submitting our judgment to it, there is an element of slavishness from which our thoughts must be purged. For in all times it is well to exalt the dignity of man by freeing him as far as possible from the tyranny of non-human power. When we have realised that Power is largely bad, that man with his knowledge of good and evil is but a helpless atom in a world which has no such knowledge, the choice is again presented to us: Shall we worship force or shall we worship goodness? Shall our god exist and be evil or shall he be recognised as the creation of our own conscience?"¹

Last of all this lugubrious cento I would take Thomas Hardy. In his recently published *Letters*² there occurs the following passage:

"After infinite trying to reconcile a scientific view of life with the emotional and spiritual, so that they may not be interdestructive, I come to the following general principles: Law has produced in man a child who cannot but constantly reproach

¹ *Philosophical Essays*, "The Free Man's Worship."

² Vol. ii, p. 192.

its parent for doing much and yet not all, and constantly say to such parent that it would have been better never to have begun doing than to have overdone so greatly. The emotions have no place in a world of defect, and it is a cruel injustice that they should have developed in it. If Law itself had consciousness how the aspect of its creatures would terrify it, fill it with remorse."

Hardy, like Russell and Mill, constantly oscillates in this and in other passages of his writings between speaking of Nature as if it were a blundering and unjust, or even malignant, personal being, and a blind, unconscious system of force, but throughout it is clear that he thinks of man as morally higher than Nature, a creature of a nobler kind than its creator. And the same idea runs through all the other impeachments as well.

These passages are all from writers who are universally recognised as representative of the spirit of the age and, I believe, express its fundamental spiritual problem, the problem which has been set it by its acceptance of the scientific account of things as ultimate, with, as it believes, the dismissal of Theism as a necessary consequence. Obviously it has the old problem of Theism, the existence of evil, still on its hands, though it appears no longer as the problem of evil, but as the riddle of the world. It is not God now who is mysterious, it is Nature, Nature expounded to us with the terrible clarity of science. Clear it may be in the parts, for we have text-books of admirable lucidity on all the particular sciences. But when we put the parts together and try to make a whole of them is the result such as can permanently hold the mind of man?

As we have seen, all these writers oscillate between describing Nature as morally evil and morally indifferent. Further, they all imply that man is objectively a nobler being than Nature. That is to say, they do not think good and evil, right and wrong, are merely human illusions. I submit that these two positions are in fundamental discord, and that one of them must give way to and be transformed by the other. You cannot have an absolute standard of right and wrong emanating from a morally evil or indifferent universe. I shall not at this stage argue the point, but shall content myself with saying that we have here a position that is intellectually quite untenable. Difficulties there may be in the solution given by the Christian revelation, but nothing comparable with this.

Meantime let it be said that if we concede the principle which is assumed by all these writers, that the scientific account of the universe is the final account, then I believe that their conclusion is irrefutable. Human life is fundamentally a tragedy. These writers have had the courage to face the facts, and in time the simple pressure of these facts will force all our literature and art and social and political aspirations down to their own level of pessimism.

Consider what is the human situation. The life of a nation which has lost its freedom and is in subjection to an alien power is not an enviable one, even if that subjugating power is of a higher type of civilisation than its own. In such a case it may in the long run be better for it to be under the yoke until it is ready for freedom, but meantime all generous minds sympathise with it in its dis-

satisfaction under that foreign sway. But if the lot of a subjugated people under a more advanced power be hard, what shall we say of a higher civilisation enslaved by a lower power? Surely that is a kind of earthly hell. In such a pitiable condition of affairs rebellion is the highest virtue and will enlist on its side the finest and bravest spirits. They are its true heroes and prophets. Yet their rebellion must be futile if the subjugating power is irresistible. Who can call such a condition of affairs anything but irremediable tragedy? Yet if the scientific account of things is held to be the last word such, beyond question, is the permanent human situation. But is this the final answer? Does it take reasonable account of all the realities?

This, I repeat, is the real problem before human thought to-day. The substance of it is as old as mankind, and, as we shall see later, the Christian faith had and has its own way of dealing with it. In the minds of many that solution has been put aside in the belief that science could furnish a better explanation. But that explanation has resulted in what seems at last to be very like a *reductio ad absurdum*. Having now stated the issue we have to explore it more thoroughly, and to consider whether we cannot reach a point of view which will enable us to do full justice to all the facts which constitute the problem.

II

HUMANISM

IN the last lecture we saw that there is one fundamental problem behind all the greater philosophies and behind all the religions of the world, the problem which is set man by the existence of his personality within the world of Nature. It is both an intellectual and a practical problem. On the one hand man has to try to explain the strange mystery that Nature seems to have produced a kind of being higher than herself whom she yet means completely to destroy; on the other he has to do his utmost, if he is to be true to what he knows to be the higher element in him, to "overcome the world." The test, therefore, which we must apply to every new philosophy or type of thought is whether or not it grapples with this fundamental problem, or whether it evades it. Here is the acid test, by which we distinguish between the deep and the shallow, the evanescent and the permanent, the false and the true in philosophy and in the realm of faith. It is obvious that the intellectual and the practical solutions are different methods of dealing with the same problem. If a man refuses to face the practical risks of overcoming the world it is certain that the world will overcome him. The animal element in him will submerge the higher, he will lose his sense of moral values, will accept the

lower standards of the society around him, and gradually lose all perception that there is any intellectual problem at all. Inevitably this will determine all his philosophy of life. On the other hand, if he starts with a spiritual view of life this will react upon all his moral standards. That which we think to be real invariably determines our views of that which we believe to be good or right, and nerves us to struggle for its victory. The intellectual task of explaining the world and the practical task of overcoming it are therefore vitally related to each other. To every projected solution we must apply the double test: Does it explain the mystery? Does it work in the domain of character?

To-day, in our Western world at least, we cannot say that there is any dominant philosophy. The older Materialism has been discredited by recent advances in the physical science on which it leaned, and the Absolute Idealism which prevailed in the universities of Great Britain up to the close of the nineteenth century has failed to hold the mind of the world which emerged from the War, which has made it but too plain that the theory of a merely immanent Reason of the world is insufficient either to explain or to save it. Moreover, Pragmatism, however useful it may have been as a protest against the opiate of Absolute Idealism, has never been able to capture the thought of Great Britain, and seems to be on the wane in America. We are living amid the wreck of the philosophies of the Victorian Age, in a period, it may be hoped, of transition to something deeper and truer to all the realities of human experience. Meantime there

has arisen a new version of a philosophy of last century which the Idealists prematurely believed they had destroyed, the philosophy of Positivism. The reappearance of Positivism under the more attractive name of Humanism has been one of the most interesting features of the last decade. The main focus of the movement has been in the United States, but it has not a few representatives also in England, and as we shall see it has still wider affiliations. In America we have to distinguish between the Humanism of such writers as the late Irving Babbitt and the Humanism of Lippmann, Krutch, Ames, Eustace Haydon, John Dewey and others. These are quite distinct movements. They ought indeed to be considered as two different types of thought contending for the right to use an attractive name, rather than as two varieties of a species. Both lay great emphasis on Humanity, but the former thinks mainly of Humanity as distinct from Nature, and the latter of Humanity as distinct from God, and as the true object of man's reverence and love.

We are concerned here wholly with the second kind of Humanism, and the group of talented writers who have given it expression in books which are nearly all admirably written, and have had a very wide circulation. They are books written for the *intelligentsia* rather than for the specialist, but all reveal a wide knowledge and a grave sense of the dangers confronting society from the existing anarchy of belief. In the books of Krutch and Lippmann in particular we find a deep and sad conviction that with the decay of religion and of idealism in philosophy a glory is departing from

the world that can never return. What are the essential features of American Humanism? To put the matter briefly, the common groundwork of thought may be thus described. (1) The basis of Theism and of Christianity has once for all been destroyed by science. Nature is the foundation of everything. The only trustworthy knowledge of the universe which we have comes from science, which is our only pathway to Reality.

The latest Humanist book, Professor John Dewey's volume on *A Common Faith*, is quite explicit on this point, and as the issue is fundamental I shall quote it at length. After stating that "Protestantism has largely abandoned the idea that particular ecclesiastical sources can authoritatively determine cosmic, historic and theological beliefs," he goes on to say of modern Christians that "with certain exceptions numerically insignificant they have retained a certain indispensable minimum of intellectual content. . . . Even when they have greatly reduced the bulk of intellectual content to be accepted, they have insisted at least upon theism and the immortality of the individual soul." He then goes on to say that the progress of science "has sapped and undermined every kind of religious belief to which intellectual assent" is required. Astronomy has broken up all religious cosmologies and the Christian idea of ascent to Heaven. Geology has displaced all myths of creation. Biology has disintegrated old ideas of soul and mind, and has thus "made a profound impression upon ideas of sin, redemption and immortality." Anthropology, history and literary criticism have produced a radically new historical account of the

Christian origin. Finally, psychology bids fair to explain everything in human life that once seemed "supernatural."

Mr Dewey then proceeds to sum up his conclusions from these facts, and in so doing discloses his fundamental theory of true knowledge and the foundations of the Humanist system. "The significant bearing for my purpose of all this is that new methods of inquiry and reflection have become, for the educated man to-day, the final arbiter of all questions of fact, existence and intellectual assent. Nothing less than a revolution in the seat of intellectual authority has taken place." "The mind of man is being habituated to a new method and ideal: there is but one sure road of access to truth—the road of patient co-operative inquiry, operating by means of observation, experiment, record and controlled reflection. The scope of the change is well illustrated by the fact that wherever a particular outpost is surrendered it is usually met by the remark from a liberal theologian that the particular doctrine or supposed literary or historical tenet surrendered was never, after all, an intrinsic part of religious belief, and that without it the true nature of religion stands out more clearly than before. Equally significant is the growing gulf between fundamentalists and liberals in the Church. What is not realised—although perhaps it is more definitely seen by fundamentalists than by liberals—is that the issue does not concern this or that piecemeal item of belief, but enters into the question of the method by which any and every item of intellectual belief is to be arrived at and justified. The positive lesson is that religious qualities and values, if they

are real at all, are not bound up with any item of intellectual assent, not even that of the existence of the God of Theism; and that under existing conditions the religious function in experience can be emancipated only through surrender of the whole notion of special truths that are religious by their own nature, together with the idea of peculiar avenues of access to such truths. For were we to admit that there is but one method for ascertaining fact and truth—that conveyed by the word ‘scientific’ in its most general and generous sense—no discovery in any branch of knowledge and inquiry could then disturb the faith that is religious. I should describe this faith as the unification of the self through allegiance to inclusive ideal ends, which imagination presents to us and to which the human will responds as worthy of controlling our desires and choices.”

The position that science is the only pathway to Reality, and that the scientific account of Reality is in radical contradiction to the religious interpretation of the world, is more briefly expressed in a passage in the autobiographical section of Mr Julian Huxley’s *Religion without Revelation*. Like Mr Dewey he is in quest of “a common faith” which will endure, and like him he believes that he has found it in the worship of “ideals which imagination presents to us” (“values which we create”), and to which the human will responds as worthy of controlling our desires and choices. In describing how he built up this faith for himself, he says, “I set myself in the intervals of military training to read a number of books of a theological character, with the intention of seeing how much of them I

could grasp in terms of the evolutionary rationalistic scheme at which I had then arrived." He goes on to say that one of these books was *Lux Mundi*, and that he was at once fascinated and repelled by it, fascinated by the delicacy and beauty of character which it revealed, and repelled by the sheer intellectual perversity of its attitude. We have the whole situation here disclosed with a most disarming and ingenuous candour! The foundation of all the Humanist books is this wholesale acceptance of the purely scientific account of the universe as complete finality. These writers have said explicitly what is implied in all the Humanist writings. The fundamental assumption, indeed, on which they all proceed is that science is the sole pathway to Reality, and that the scientific interpretation of the world is in radical contradiction with the interpretation of faith.

(2) That is the negative side of Humanism. Mr Dewey has also stated its positive side. Humanism teaches "allegiance to inclusive ideal ends, which imagination presents to us, and to which the human will responds as worthy of controlling our desires and choices." All the other Humanists agree with him here that science alone can tell us about Reality, and Reality is always measurable, whether it be space or time or energy or space-time. But over and above that world, they admit, there is the world of values and ideals which Mr Huxley says we "create" and which, according to Mr Dewey, we owe to man's "imagination." The supreme necessity to-day is for man to preserve as much as possible of this realm of values, as much, that is to say, as is rationally possible for him on the natural-

istic basis which has become inevitable for every man who will fearlessly use his reason. Much, no doubt, of that realm of values must go with the disappearance of God and the hope of immortality, but the very science which has destroyed that old mythology has put in our hands immeasurable new powers for the service of man. We are bidden, as it were, to turn aside from futile worship of heavens that are empty, and from hopes of a future life that are vain, to fix our thoughts upon Man as "the true Shekinah," the most wonderful being in the universe, who is worthy alike of our compassion, our reverence and our devoted service. This is in effect the "message" of American Humanism which is put with real distinction by Lippmann and Krutch.

Haydon's book, *The Quest of the Ages*, which has been called the "Bible of Humanism," while it shows a wider knowledge of the details of the history of religion, is not on the same plane of insight or distinction. It combines with the general Humanist position the impossible thesis that devotion to the social welfare of man has always been the essence of religion, that everything else has been accidental, and that the "Quest of the Ages," having reached the stage of discovery that all the gods and all the hopes of immortality in a transcendent world which have hitherto cumbered religion are illusions, must now get down to its real work, the betterment of man's social life. He urges this with an eloquence which can only be called torrential, and appeals to the churches to give up their obsolete faiths and divisions and to lead the "impassioned youth" of to-day on to

victory, instead of being left behind by them in the march of progress.

In Mr Huxley's genial and copious book, written in entire independence of the American movement, the word "Humanism" rarely occurs, and that only incidentally, but its fundamental positions are one with those of the transatlantic writers, and its spirit of earnest desire to use all the resources of science for the betterment of the life of man as the culminating and highest product of the evolutionary purpose, is the same. Like the American writers, Huxley starts from the assumption that science has definitely made an end of revelation, of faith in a personal God, and of hope of a life to come. Yet he recognises the great Christian "values," and endeavours to conserve them as far as the naturalistic scheme of thought will allow. In the endeavour to do this he is led into a private theological enterprise of his own, and presents us with his own version of the Trinity, "new gods for old." He is led, indeed, unawares into metaphysic. Behind Nature the world as revealed to the senses is a great "substance." This substance has a threefold manifestation: (1) the "Power of Nature"; (2) the ideal goals of the human mind; (3) actual humanity. The first corresponds to the Father, the second to the Holy Spirit, the third to the Son. The hidden reality or substance behind the three aspects is the true object of religion, and is to be worshipped as "sacred." How this is to be achieved when its first aspect, the power of Nature—"external Nature"—is said to be arbitrary, and indifferent to human life, and the third member of the Trinity, empirical mankind,

includes within it the egoist, the murderer, the sadist, and the sex pervert, as well as the hero and the saint, is left unexplained. Indeed, I fear it must be said that the writer has no real understanding of the reasons and the values which led the Christian Church to formulate its doctrine of the Trinity.

I have selected but a few of these Humanist writings as typical of a much larger number. They show a wide range of culture, a genuine love of humanity and a high *morale*. It is not doing them any disparagement to say that none of them are in the first flight as serious enterprises of constructive thought. They do not really get to grips with that fundamental problem which I have outlined in the opening lecture, which I believe to be the problem of our age. If I am right in so believing, then every thinker of our own and coming generations must take rank by the measure in which he has faced and solved it. Failing that, his dimension must be measured by the extent to which he has at least realised it. Of the Humanist writers whom I have quoted Mr Lippmann and Mr Krutch do in some measure realise its gravity more fully than does Mr Huxley, and certainly much more fully than the eloquent Mr Haydon. But while the first has described something of the tragedy of man's case as, stripped of the faith that he once had, he faces the ambiguous and tremendous world of Nature, and realises the shortness of life's little day, none of them seem to realise the radical incoherence of the position in which they stand, the impossibility of combining that high estimate of man which is common to

them all with that naturalistic conception of the world which they all take for granted. This is the vulnerable point which the great philosophies at least face, and in their own way try to solve. Humanism is little better than a restatement of the problem brought up to date, and the very gifts of exposition which these writers possess serve but to disclose more plainly the true elements of the mystery which some philosophers at least have been able to evade by a cloud of technical verbiage.

But if Humanism cannot thus take rank with the greater philosophies, and has little that is new to say on the problem of the ages, it has a very great value of quite another kind. I know nothing that so plainly or clearly discloses the troubled mind of our own age, or the intellectual causes at least which have produced its trouble. The Humanists are simply exponents of a condition of mind that is to-day as widely spread as Western civilisation itself. We get it not only in Thomas Hardy's writings, but in Galsworthy's *Forsyte Saga* as well. Bertrand Russell's *The Free Man's Worship* expresses it in prose that is as telling as literature as it is unimpressive as philosophy.¹ It is the working philosophy, unless I greatly misunderstand them, of a great many of our younger men and women of letters, poets, novelists and journalists of the higher class. It is a remarkable fact that whereas science on the whole has moved nearer to the spirit of Christianity, largely owing to a new recognition of its own limitations, literature is notably less Chris-

¹ Lord Russell in a preface to his collected Essays admits as much, and indicates that he has moved to a more consistent position than that which he held when he wrote this most eloquent of all his minor writings.

tian than it was fifty years ago. In short, I think that outside of the Churches the average mind of Western Christendom to-day tends to accept the scientific view of the world as the ultimate truth about it, while at the same time all its better spirits desire to conserve as much of the Christian values, especially its valuation of man, as is believed to be possible. And this, as I have said, is the fundamental idea of Humanism.

I would go farther. There is certainly a profound contrast between the reasonable and cultured books of the Humanism of the English-speaking lands, with their dignified and melancholy farewell to what they believe to be the departing faith of Christendom, and the fierce contempt and hatred of it expressed in the new literature of Soviet Russia. The social Utopia of transatlantic Humanism is in odd contrast, moreover, with that of Trotsky and Stalin, and some may think that to bring them together is a forced combination. But what is the motive power behind all the passion of the Soviet revolution in so far as that is a moral force and not a mere struggle for "a place in the sun"? Is it not the hope of an earthly Utopia to be won by the technical application of science to the economic needs of man? And though Bolshevism denies sin against God as an invention of the priesthood, it has a very definite sin against man on its black list from which all other sins flow. "The one evil" says Prince Mirsky in his *Life of Lenin*, "is the exploitation of man by man, the one task to build up a social order in which there will be no room for such exploitation, the one duty to contribute to the fight for such an order." Here

we have the real note of Humanism. Finally, both Bolshevism and Humanism alike have the same fundamental philosophy of the universe, that in the last resort it is a system of blind impersonal forces without a cosmic purpose or aim.

To-day this Western culture, which in both stated forms is based on a naturalistic version of science, is penetrating more or less into all lands. Missionary experts at the last Œcumenical Missionary Conference in Jerusalem were agreed that whereas twenty-five years ago the great opponents of Christianity in these lands were the ancient non-Christian religions, the new and more formidable antagonist to-day was this secular Western culture which among the educated classes was now rapidly disintegrating both these ancient pagan cultures and the moralities which were expressed in them.

But there is more to be said. The Naturalism which is for the moment triumphant in Russia, and which is acting as a powerful leaven in the form of Humanism in America, is also at work, though in a less conscious and vocal form, among the masses of our own people. I cannot but think that we have here one of the chief causes of the difficulty which in many parts of our own country the Churches find in holding the interests of the masses, or even of their own youth. I do not wish to exaggerate here. The position in Scotland at least is by no means so discouraging as it is often painted, and where there is real living conviction and sympathy in the preacher he can usually find a full response. But there is no doubt that whereas fifty or a hundred years ago there was a universally accepted background of conviction as to the elementary truths

of Biblical religion, that background has, for the younger generation at least, largely disappeared. Man's spiritual nature, his destiny, his sin, his responsibility to God, his need of divine grace, the certainty of a life to come, the providence of God, how far can we say that the masses of our people are possessed by these great convictions to-day? Once one could take them for granted. Can we do so any longer? I gravely doubt if we can, and I strongly suspect that here we have an explanation of at least part of that accusation of "unreality" in our teaching and worship which is so frequent among the non-churchgoing classes. If preachers reason from presuppositions which are not shared by those who hear them, their reasonings and appeals must necessarily seem "unreal." How far this state of things is due to the great increase in scientific teaching in all our schools is another question. Certainly this is a factor in the situation that cannot be ignored. Every human being, as G. K. Chesterton truly said, has some fundamental view of the nature of things, and if the scientific view of the world is taught more widely and efficiently than the religious view, and to its exclusion, I cannot but believe that we have here a factor in secularising the mind of our people that it would be folly to ignore. When taught and received to the exclusion of the religious interpretation of the world of human life, its whole tendency is to thin down the thought of God to a mere transparency and make dim and shadowy the hope of a life to come. The same outlines of a world-view run everywhere among these secularised and half-secularised multitudes to-day,

sometimes broken and worn and confused with other outlines.

The same general spectrum of thought, as I have said, goes all round the world though the colour bands vary from continent to continent. In these lectures, however, we are only concerned with the western half of that spectrum, the Humanism of America and Great Britain, and to that we now return.

As we who are Christians study this literature and endeavour to familiarise ourselves with its outlook on the world, one of the questions which inevitably arise in our minds is, How did this world-view come into being, and why does it seem to have so powerful an appeal to-day to many? The countries in which it has come into being have, with whatever qualifications we may use the term, been Christian countries. They have at least been parts of what is usually known as Christendom, in which the Christian view of the world of human life has long been in a predominant position. The new view of Humanism has, as it were, been superimposed upon that view and in the minds of many has completely displaced it. Now why is this? There are not a few Christians who will say that there is nothing surprising in it. Christianity, they say, makes great demands upon every human being. It asks for complete self-devotion to God. When human beings are unprepared to answer that demand, to give everything and to risk everything on Him, they must necessarily invent defence mechanisms of unbelief and half-belief if they are to keep their self-respect. This, as modern psychology has shown, can be done in perfect good

faith. So fresh critics would explain the entire phenomenon of Humanism and its widespread popularity in the modern world. They say that modern, like ancient men, often simply do not wish to believe in an almighty, pure and loving God, and that just as in the past they believed in many gods good and bad, so to-day they prefer to believe in an impersonal universe and to set man on the throne. They would, moreover, consider all further reasoning or endeavour to get at the heart of Humanism by intellectual processes, as beside the real mark. The reluctant human will, rather than the perplexed human understanding, is the real centre of the target.

Now I should never think of denying that there is some truth in this vigorous and rigorous dealing with modern "unbelief." Modern investigation has thrown new light on the great part which the will plays in the formation of all human thought, even on what used to be considered purely scientific thought, but especially on all thought which has to do with vital human interests; and, further, modern psychology has demonstrated the extraordinary power of self-deception latent in the subconscious mind, its powers of throwing out smoke-screens of defence against unpleasant realities. It may be noted, moreover, that it would hardly lie with the Humanists to object to such a summary treatment of their rejection of Theism as bigoted and unfair. For it is a peculiarity of the writers whom we are considering that they make abundant use of this same psychological material in disposing of the whole case for religious faith. To them the whole religious interpretation of the world and of

human life is simply so much "wishful thinking." The phrase is worked to death, especially by the American writers, and of course it is the very substance of the Bolshevist thinking that religion is "the opiate of the masses," a cunning and wicked invention of capitalists, imposed upon the soul of the working classes to dull their sorrows and make them content to submit to robbery and oppression by the promise of happiness in a future life.

Now, while it is quite clear that there is here in this deep and all-pervasive influence of a man's practical and emotional nature ground for continual vigilance lest he should deceive himself, it will not do to dispose either of belief or non-belief in this summary fashion. To do so would, for one thing, make an end of all reasonable discourse. If I were to point out to my opponent that his whole philosophy of life is simply a smoke-screen for his secret dishonesty and lust, and he were to retaliate that I am so feeble-minded that I believe only what I wish to believe because it will make me happier, we might on both sides be perfectly sincere, and there might be truth in both charges, but on both sides we should have shut off any chance of advancing our own thoughts and getting nearer to that Reality which is only another name for God. In fact, pushed to its logical conclusion, the method can only lead to brawling and complete scepticism. On the one hand the sincerely religious man must admit to the Humanist that there is real mystery in the universe for all mortal and sinful and intellectually limited men, himself included. On the other, it may be very respectfully pressed upon the Humanists, and here, one must regret to say that Mr Lippmann

is a chief offender, that it will hardly do to maintain that all religious faith is simply "wishful thinking," the implication being that he and his friends alone have minds of such disinterestedness, intellectual penetration and clarity that they can discern the ultimate nature of things, which is hidden, because of their emotional prejudices, from a Pascal or a Newton or a Kelvin. You wish to believe in God, and lo! you do believe. Is faith, then, so easy a matter? Alas, faith is not so common as all that! Can Mr Lippmann and his friends not imagine that there are men and women, not a few, whose very desire to believe in God makes them more and not less scrupulous in weighing every scrap of the evidence? One ought to be cautious surely in making such charges of "wishful thinking" against all religious faiths. It is hardly becoming when one remembers some of the great natures who have greatly believed because they have thought long and endured much. And the phrase becomes simply comic as one meets it in Mr Haydon's volume, after his whirlwind career down the ages and through the religions, seeking to prove that religion is simply the enthusiasm of humanity, and that its true nature is becoming clear to-day for the first time in the "Twilight of the Gods." If the facts of the history of religion can be made to prove that, they can be made to prove anything. Why Mr Haydon should wish to prove that is his own concern, but it certainly does not seem to me to lie with him to accuse other people of "wishful thinking."

I do not think that we shall really advance the question, however, by bringing such personal ques-

tions further into the field. It has been necessary to refer to them because the Humanist books make such liberal use of this particular phrase to discredit all religious thought. Leaving the matter behind for the time we shall proceed with our inquiry into the material grounds for the Humanist position.

What reasons do the Humanists give for their rejection of faith in the living God, and their acceptance instead of the belief that there is nothing transcending the world of Nature mechanically determined in every part and indifferent to good or evil?

It is interesting to note that some of the stock difficulties of Theism discussed in theological textbooks never appear in these writings. There are, so far as I can find, only two main reasons given:

The first is that no educated man or woman to-day can reject the scientific view of the world, and that the scientific view is plainly inconsistent with the Theistic interpretation.

The second is that the presence of evil in the world on so great a scale is plainly inconsistent with the view that it has been created and is maintained and governed by an almighty God of Love.

To these two broad and fundamental reasons Mr Haydon and Mr Huxley add a supplementary and practical reason for the rejection of Theism. They say that if men believe in a wise, good and almighty God, they must inevitably make this an excuse for their own apathy in social science and in social reform. Once the belief in God is dispelled, but not till then, will they feel their responsibility and put out their full strength.

We shall in what follows be concerned in the

main with the first two statements and shall deal only more briefly with the last. This, I think, is fair, because little emphasis is laid upon the third position. It is a kind of afterthought rather than a very real ground of rejection of belief in God.

I propose, then, in what follows to inquire whether Humanism is a coherent and satisfactory system of thought and, above all, whether it really solves the fundamental problem of all the greater philosophies and faiths as I have stated it in the opening lecture. The argument will involve, first of all, the consideration of whether the underlying assumption of all the Humanist writers, that science is the only pathway to Reality, is sound; secondly, whether belief in God promotes quietism and apathy; and thirdly, whether the fact of evil is fatal to faith in God. This will inevitably lead us to revelation and the Christian solution of the problem.

III

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

IN last lecture a long quotation was given from Mr Dewey's recently published volume *A Common Faith*. It is the best summary I have been able to find of this part of the general Humanist position. As we have seen, the author asserts the absolute primacy of "science." "There is but one sure road of access to the truth, the road of patient co-operative inquiry, operated by means of observation, experiment, record and controlled reflection." "There is but one method for ascertaining fact and proof, that conveyed by the word 'scientific' in its most generous and liberal sense." This is the intellectual corner stone of Humanism. Science alone can penetrate to the very core of reality and tell us what is the final truth about the cosmos and about ourselves. The text-books of all the sciences will thus give us the last word on Reality. What this in effect amounts to is that science must displace both philosophy and revelation, both of which have hitherto claimed to have the last word.

It is very important to realise the peculiar hold which this, I believe, quite unwarranted and, in the case of most of these Humanist writers, uncritical over-estimate of the place and function of natural science in the great domain of human knowledge, has upon their minds. They simply take it for granted, and believe that they have behind them

and backing them the whole formidable magnitude of scientific achievement, and, armed with this assurance, they feel themselves warranted to judge all other types of thought and experience.

The same obsession explains another feature of these books to which I have referred in the preceding lecture. They speak with a certainty that can be only called pontifical of the incredibility of the older faith. No infallible Pope could be surer of his ground than they are, or more clear that any other way of interpreting the universe than their own is due to some perversion. The supreme pontiffs would trace the delusion of those who differ with them to sin: the Humanists trace the delusion of all those who differ with them to "wishful thinking," that is, to emotional prejudice. Now in neither case have we to do here with personal megalomania. In all personal matters Pope and Humanist are alike, I have no doubt, modest and reasonable human beings. But in his official pronouncements the Pope speaks *ex cathedra*, believing that he has the whole true Church behind him, and that behind the Church is the Divine Trinity. So the Humanists believe that behind them they have the overwhelming authority of "science," and are unconsciously inflated by this conviction, to speak with an assurance to which neither the facts nor their own considerable abilities entitle them.

Now if this be so, it is obviously necessary, first of all, to get some clear idea of what we mean by science and the scientific method. The word is sometimes loosely used to describe every kind of accurate and systematised knowledge. The older

Huxley defined it thus: "By science I understand all knowledge that rests upon evidence and reasoning." Another scientific writer maintains that all intelligent knowledge is science. To my mind such definitions would include all real theology, philosophy and historical learning. The definition is far too wide to be of any use. The German use of the word *Wissenschaft* favours this wider and vaguer meaning. Clearly we need something much more precise. By the word Science in this volume I shall always mean what it generally means in English, that is to say what the Germans call "Exact Science," which for them includes all the sciences of nature and also mathematics. I would add to these the mixed sciences, psychology and sociology, because they deal with the facts of human nature in a purely inductive way. This is the same usage as prevails in France. To be more specific I would adopt Lord Acton's definition: "Science is the co-ordination of a great mass of similar facts into the form of a generalisation, a principle, or a law, which will enable us to predict with certainty the recurrence of events under like conditions." Karl Pearson¹ has given a like definition more briefly: "The classification of facts, the recognition of their sequence and relative significance is the function of science." The method of every science is to observe the facts and processes in its domain, to classify these, to frame hypotheses to account for them, and by experiment to verify or confute these hypotheses, and so gradually to discover a system of universal impersonal laws or uniformities of process, whether

¹ *Grammar of Science*, p. 60.

these processes be astronomical, physical, chemical, biological, psychological or sociological. The account of the world which emerges from this scientific method is always abstract, general or impersonal, and as the generalisations of science become ever wider and more abstract they tend at last to become purely mathematical. This is what is generally known as the scientific method, with which anyone can familiarise himself by the study of its text-books or its classics, Newton's *Principia*, Darwin's *Origin of Species* or Marx's *Das Kapital*. The ideal goal of science is to find a generalisation so wide that everything that happens in the way of natural process or personal and individual achievement can be deduced from the fundamental law and cited as an illustration of its range. The abstract and general swallows up the individual.

Over against this stands the religious interpretation in one or other of its many forms. William James has truly described the religious interpretation of the world as "personal-romantic," the scientific as "abstract and impersonal." The religious interpretation, and of this, for greater clearness of exposition, I shall take the Bible as the classical expression, believes that the Divine Personality is at the heart of all things, realising His purposes through all natural process, creating through it other personalities, caring for them, guiding them, ruling, over-ruling and educating them for ever fuller communion with Himself. Thus the Biblical interpretation of Nature and of life is shot through and through with purpose and meaning. All Nature is instrumental to the purposes of God, "fire and hail, snow and vapour, stormy wind

fulfilling His word." "He maketh the grass to grow upon the mountains." He made "the Pleiades and Orion," "the Bear and her train," and "He turneth darkness into morning and maketh the day dark with the night. He calleth for the waters of the sea and poureth them out upon the face of the earth." So too is it with the great tidal movements of the nations. "He will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss for them from the end of the earth, and behold they shall come with speed swiftly . . . and there shall be none to deliver." So too is it not only with nations but with individuals. "God sent Moses his servant" after He had trained him and fashioned him for his work; through him He trained and fashioned Israel for its historic mission; and through Israel is fashioning and training humanity for the Kingdom of God. The roots of everything lie deep in the Divine Personality. Everything, therefore, is held together and controlled by purpose moving on to the realisation of supreme value. Such is the Old Testament conception, throughout, in the period of preparation. And when the "fulness of the time" comes, our Lord takes over the whole interpretation. "Be not anxious for the morrow. . . . The very hairs of your head are all numbered. . . . Seek ye first the Kingdom of God. . . . Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." That this interpretation of Nature and of life underlies the apostolic teaching, and that the whole Christian morality at every point presupposes this personal care and love of God, is plain to the reader of the New Testament, and in every Chris-

tian age is illustrated in every classic of Christian biography and devotion. Everything here is "personal" and "romantic." All progressive Christian life is a continual personal adventure upon God, and ever increasing personal communion with Him. That this "personal-romantic" view of the world underlies the lives of the heroes and saints of Christendom countless religious biographies bear witness. Therefore the vital question to-day is whether these two interpretations of human life and of Nature, the abstract and general or scientific view, and the personal and romantic or religious interpretation, are compatible with each other, and if so, which is the deeper and more inclusive.

It is very important to note that while science makes no mention either in its pioneer works of investigation or its text-books, of God or His purposes, it does not deny Him in any one of them. It confines itself to facts and to uniformities of process, and uses a certain method in dealing with them. It is only brought into collision with these faiths when its spokesmen pass beyond the bounds of science and say that theirs is the only pathway to Reality. In science the exclusion of God and cosmic purpose from its manuals and classics is not due to unbelief. It is purely methodological. Science's business is to disentangle the enormously entangled, many-coloured skeins of natural phenomena, to classify them, to describe them, to discover conformities of sequence and recurrence among them, and so to enable men to predict and take account of them beforehand. Clearly it is possible for the most devout as well as the most irreligious to take part in that common labour.

But Naturalism takes this methodological omission and transforms it into denial. There is no rational connection between science and Naturalism, unless it can be shown that it is essential to science that it should claim to give a complete and final account of reality. We have here a distinction of basal importance, for unquestionably to-day the scientific account of the world is in the ascendant. It is taught in all our schools. It has been popularised in great numbers of admirable books. I think that at present the popularisation of science is being more efficiently carried out than the popularisation of religion in spite of all the pulpits in the land. Science, through the schools in particular, is reaching the masses in a way which is at present unattained by religion. Now it cannot be too clearly recognised that if the abstract impersonal view of the universe be taught and believed, to the exclusion of the other, there must be an end of all that has hitherto been believed to be the very essence not only of Christianity but of all religions. There will be no need of any persecution or anti-religious wars. The intellectual climate will do all that is necessary in a generation or two. Along with the Christian interpretation of the world must necessarily go the Christian morality. What is at the heart of that standard of the good life? Is it not that God being our Almighty Father we can safely throw the burden of our personal cares upon Him, slay selfishness and fear through faith, and so be set free to live disinterestedly for the love and service of our fellow-men, and go through the world relying on His Providence and Spirit to see us through? If,

however, I have to do in the last resort not with the Almighty Father, but only with a system of impersonal law, then the whole basis of the Christian morality is struck away, and it becomes no longer a reasonable life for mortal man. In such a world it becomes fantastic and out of touch with reality. This is what makes Mr Lippmann's gospel of disinterestedness so thin and so much of an anticlimax to his incisive and disturbing book. It seems to me to be the moral ideal of a cultivated Humanist who has a considerable balance at the bank and in the funds, rather than one that is possible for the great multitude of careworn humanity. And if men and women be not eternal children of the Eternal Father, if they are at bottom simply the more highly developed products of the simian stock, mainly animal by descent, with a comparatively brief human culmination, it seems clear that our whole way of regarding them must be different from that which follows if every human being is fundamentally spiritual, a spirit struggling still within the limits of the flesh upwards to its Father. I do not dwell upon these obvious consequences of Naturalism with the intention of prejudicing the argument. If Naturalism can show convincing grounds for its view of the world, then certainly we must face the full consequences as Mr Krutch and Mr Lippmann do with dignity and courage. But what is the case for regarding science as the one pathway to Reality? I think we can show plainly that there is no sound case at all. The argument consists of two parts; I shall endeavour, first of all, in this chapter to show that in the very nature of the case, because of its

self-imposed limitations, the scientific method can never give us a full and adequate interpretation of Nature and of human life; and secondly, in subsequent chapters, that when forgetting these self-imposed limits of science we press it into a use for which it is not fitted, the result is to give us an obviously mutilated and distorted picture of the universe, and in the end to lead us into a suicidal scepticism about knowledge.

I

We have already reached a definition of science. We have now to analyse it more closely. We have to show that in the nature of the case the scientific method is an instrument of the mind which is framed for certain definite purposes; that for these purposes it is extraordinarily efficient; but that when we forget that it has been constructed for these purposes and use it for others of a quite different nature, the results are disastrous. We may illustrate the main argument by a homely illustration. A razor (and here I am thinking of the old-fashioned and not of the new-fashioned kind) is a most efficient instrument for its purpose. Its weight, balance, shape and edge have all been determined through unknown ages of progress by adaptation to the purpose which it was intended to serve, but this has been achieved by limiting it and making it less useful for other purposes. Originally it was no doubt a knife, and could do the many things which a knife can do. Now it can do only the one thing, but it can do this very much better than it could be done by the more

generalised knife. If we use it now as a knife, we shall spoil it and do far less efficiently what the other can do without difficulty. Our argument is that Naturalism is in the position of a man who becomes so delighted with the consummate achievement of his razor that he becomes obsessed by it and uses it for all kinds of purposes, hacking, stabbing and carving with it, as if it were a knife or an axe, instead of the specialised instrument it really is. The results of such an obsession are in the end that the work he wants to do is not done, and that the instrument itself becomes discredited and spoilt.

In truth, with all the amazing achievement of science working within its own domain, there is that in its very nature which prevents it from ever giving anything but a very defective account of the whole. "Science," said a distinguished man of science once to the present writer, "is a net framed to catch certain kinds of fish and to let other fish through," and the best scientific thought of our day is moving towards a like conclusion. The thinking of the Humanist books is curiously belated as to this point. They give little or no sign of being influenced by what Mr Collingwood calls "by far the most important critical movement of the last half-century."¹ Let us hear what this acute thinker, in no way prejudiced by traditionalism, has to say on this "movement." "The modern world has with a curious unanimity changed its mind as to the nature of science almost within living memory. In the middle of the nineteenth century it was believed that science was the discovery of the

¹ *Speculum Mentis*, p. 180.

laws of nature ; that is to say, the determination of the structure actually existing in the world of facts. A generation or more ago this opinion began to collapse, not owing to persons hostile to the pursuit of science, if such persons existed, but owing to the reflection upon their own work of scientists themselves, who began to form the belief that their scientific labours were directed to the attainment not of truth,¹ but of something else. . . . The whole point of this critical movement of the last half-century is lost if it is taken for a revival of abstract scepticism. It is not a revolt against thought as such, but against the specific form which thought presents as science, and this we know by now to be the abstract concept. . . . It is an attempt to show not that knowledge in general is impossible, but that science is not knowledge" (*Speculum Mentis*, pp. 181-82).

I do not understand the writer here as denying that science gives a very real and essential aspect of truth, but only as asserting that it cannot give us a final account of things, and here he has unquestionably behind him a great and growing agreement not only among philosophers, but even among many men of science, who indeed, as he says, have been the pioneers in this movement.

There have been two causes of this change to which Mr Collingwood refers. Half a century ago in the age of Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall and Spencer, the main opposition to the prevalent materialism of science in Great Britain came from the philosophers, especially from those of the Idealist school which was at that time in the ascendant in all the

¹ *I.e.*, absolute reality.

greater universities. Its defence of the freedom and spirituality of man was very able, and to a large number of those who are interested in speculative thought it seemed conclusive, but it had very little influence upon men of science themselves, and its reasoning was too abstract and difficult greatly to influence the outlook even of the *intelligentsia*, the educated public of the day. Thus the two streams of thought, Idealistic Philosophy and Science, went on for the most part running side by side and never meeting, but gradually the great change to which Mr Collingwood refers has become obvious, and a very important fact is, as he has pointed out, that the change began within the sphere of science itself. What had happened? It is, I believe, the practice in modern laboratories and observatories to have a periodic overhaul or, as it is called, a "calibration" of the scientific apparatus. The instruments are examined afresh and tested to see if they are still to be trusted, or have by wear and tear undergone such minute changes as may vitiate the accuracy of their results. Now, what has been taking place in the world of science has been a similar calibration of the instruments of scientific thought, a careful overhaul of the entire scientific method. This has disclosed certain limitations under which all scientific thinkers necessarily work. Thus it is no longer possible for anyone who is fully abreast of the subject to take the scientific account of the universe with the naïveté of the Victorian men of science who never questioned that science could furnish us with a final and authoritative account of reality. In addition to this calibration of the instruments, the progress of science itself, especially

within the last few decades, has greatly reinforced the work of these pioneers in that analysis of scientific thought of which I have spoken. The series of discoveries in the higher physics, which have resulted in the quantum and relativity theories, has been of profound importance in changing the scientific outlook. The time has not yet come for theologians and philosophers finally to appraise the full significance of these changes in the scientific outlook, or to build far-reaching systems upon them. Indeed Christian theology is built upon a different foundation altogether. It is built upon what it believes a revelation of God. Modern scientific thought, moreover, is still to some extent divided on some of the most interesting questions in the higher physics. It is obviously on the march, but its present positions are camps of the night, and it is occupying them on that understanding.

Yet in the first place, with regard to some of these changes in current scientific thought, there is reasonable certainty ; in the second, it is reasonable also to point out that by these changes in the scientific outlook Naturalism, whose strength is that it leans so heavily on science, has in effect had that support withdrawn, and that science now refuses to express any opinion about that of which Naturalism is sure.

II

The first of these changes is the general recognition of the abstract nature of all inductive science. Fifty years ago the picture of the world as it was drawn by science was perfectly intelligible even to non-mathematical readers. It was represented as

at bottom consisting of practically infinite numbers of unimaginably minute spherical atoms propelled by unseen forces, colliding with each other, rebounding and forming component molecules which coalesced and separated according to certain uniform laws. The earliest form of this total sum of gyrating and racing world of atoms and molecules which science could imagine was a world of fiery mist, which in time concentrated itself into suns and stellar systems, in one planet of which the fire-mist had, after unknown transmutations, evolved into our world of sea and land and atmosphere, and had after many ages produced the world of living things, within which again there had emerged consciousness and finally the mind of man. But all the later developments, the materialism of the period maintained, were really simply arrangements and re-arrangements of the billiard-ball atom, propelled by forces of a purely physical kind. This was the materialistic Absolute, the last Reality, and however insufficient the philosopher or man of faith might find it, it was at least pictorially imaginable and intelligible.

Mathematics, it is true, was mixed up with it. The atoms were spheres and their pathways were no doubt geometrical lines and curves like the pathways of the stars, and atoms and molecules continued in fixed proportions, and so on, but the world in which all these things happened was a real world, where real things happened mathematically. But as the generalisations of physics have become wider and the abstractions more sweeping, the world of physical science has been becoming more mathematical and more difficult for the non-

mathematical mind to understand. The inner circle of the experts sit, as it were, "upon a hill retired," discussing the newer discoveries as news of them comes in from the laboratories of the world, in a language known in its fulness only by themselves. Every now and again someone in the inner circle, or more usually from one of the concentric circles around it, steps forward and addresses the multitude, who, confident in the good faith and mastery of the pundits, sit eagerly but vainly endeavouring to understand what they are saying. What is quite clear is that the higher physics is well-nigh disappearing in mathematics.

But as physics is the basal science this can only mean that if science gives the ultimate account of the world, all sciences built upon it must in the end be resolvable into mathematics too. Even psychology and sociology must, when carried to perfection, be resolvable into mathematical formulæ, and the final truth about all human beings will be represented by diagrams and algebraical formulæ. We are here obviously moving in the region of *reductio ad absurdum*. Sir James Jeans in a recent article, in which his gifts of lucid exposition disclose only too plainly his perplexity over finding what was believed to be solid matter or real energy disappearing in abstractions and symbols, seems to think that this is Idealism or something very like it. No, Idealism has never committed itself to a position like that. It has always believed in a universe that was more than mathematics, and an absolute Being that was more than a mathematician. But, without travelling into that fascinating but intricate discussion, we may content

ourselves meantime by saying that all these recent developments seem to show quite clearly what Kant said long ago, that all physical science is a kind of imperfect mathematics, and that the more perfectly it develops its peculiar method of abstraction, the more clearly does this come out. That is why as science reaches its highest generalisations, as in physics, it becomes more and more mathematical, till, as we ascend into the highest and most abstract region of all, we seem to be moving in a region in which matter and energy have disappeared altogether in mathematics. But whither has it disappeared? It has only disappeared from the mind of the investigator. But it is still "out there" in the external world. It has slipped through the meshes of the net. Whatever Sir James Jeans may say about the physical universe, there must always surely be something for the investigator to be mathematical about.¹ The symbols that he handles are symbols of something, and that something is more than mathematics. And whatever the naturalistic investigator who insists that his methods alone can give ultimate reality about men as well as things may say about you and me, we are certainly not, and never will be, reducible to diagrams and algebraical formulæ. Yet the very methods of thought, which, pressed to the end, seem to lead to such absurd conclusions, are methods which led to most impressive results in their earlier stages. There is here plainly a paradox which demands closer examination. The nerve of the matter is the mental process of "abstraction."

¹ The theory of emergent evolution as a way of escape from this preposterous conclusion is referred to in a later lecture.

Let us try to get a clear idea of what this process of thought which is so essential to science really means.

Mathematics represents abstraction carried to its full extent, but it is very important to note that all science whatsoever is in its very nature an abstract account of the world, and that no merely abstract account can possibly be adequate. I hope to show in this and in following lectures that very much of which "we must take account," and which therefore is real, must slip through the meshes of the net of science. The point is of such vital importance that it demands elaboration. Every one of us is continually practising the intellectual method of abstraction, which in its rudimentary forms is just attending to those things that for our immediate purpose are essential, and ignoring, or abstracting from those things that for the moment and for our purposes are not essential. No human being can live and thrive who does not learn this very essential discipline of the human mind. But it is every whit as essential to remember that though for the time we have ignored these other things, they are there all the time, and when their time comes will certainly demand that we take account of them and remember that they are real also. It is essential to living and thriving that we should be able to abstract, but equally essential to living and thriving that we should not suppose that our ignoring of them means that they do not exist. If we do that our own existence will be hard and brief!

But, advancing from preliminary observation to what more immediately concerns our purpose, we

may illustrate this method of abstraction from the processes of thought common to us all. The human mind comes into consciousness in an immense panorama of things and events, which crowd in upon it through all its senses—and together make “a big, blooming, buzzing world of confusion,” to use the words in which James describes the world of the child. Man would be utterly overwhelmed by the multiplicity of these objects and events, he could never face up to them or acquire any foresight or control of them, if he had not been able to devise the marvellous intellectual tool of the concept. It has been truly said that by far the greatest inventors of the human race are the unknown inventors, the men who discovered how to make and use fire, to tame horses and cattle, to plough the soil, to invent the alphabet. But greatest of them all is the unknown inventor of the concept. This, above all, is what has given man such mastery as he has over Nature. What is the concept? It is that product of man’s mind which is expressed in the common noun: tree, cloud, river, man. Who could think, who could communicate his thought to other men, without the constant use of these common terms? Yet there is nowhere anything in Nature corresponding to any one of these terms, there are only individual trees, clouds, rivers and men. The concepts and their corresponding common nouns are highly abstract or generalised symbols of classes of these objects. How do we make them? We first classify the world of objects into groups, just as we might sort out a tangled mass of threads into groups of similar colours, putting the green, red and blue by themselves. We abstract everything

except its colour from each object, and classify according to colour. So in forming the concept man we ignore or abstract all the differences, colour, weight, height, size, age and personality, and fixing only on what all men and women have in common, we call the concept or abstraction by the common noun, man, and take it as a symbol of all the men and women that ever were or will be. This method alone enables us to handle the mass of knowledge which would otherwise overwhelm our finite intelligence. The concept is then an abstract symbol. Everybody is continually using concepts. There is no one so uneducated, so savage, so rude as not to use common nouns, and therefore to classify objects and make symbolic abstractions. Common-sense knowledge uses this method of classifying and forming of concepts and common nouns largely with a view to describing the external world. It enables men to pool their individual stocks of hard-won knowledge so that they become a common stock which is handed down from one generation to another. Science which, as has been said, is only an extension and refinement of common sense, uses its concepts partly for this purpose of description, but very largely for another purpose. Already in common-sense everyday knowledge men had discovered the vital importance of the element of recurrence in natural phenomena. Consider the value to primitive man of the knowledge that day follows night in interminable succession, and that each expands and contracts in the course of the year. Consider again the immeasurable worth of his discovery of the sequence of the seasons for sowing and reaping, for fishing and hunting, for

provision for and protection from the rigours of the winter. Foresight of the processes of Nature was soon discerned to be the master secret for the control and use of Nature. Foreknowledge was plainly power, and the way to foreknowledge lay in deeper knowledge of the processes of Nature. So impelled at first by this practical motive, man adventured forth on the life or death quest for uniformities or "laws" in Nature. I do not say this initial practical motive is now the only motive in scientific discovery, but that it has been and is at its heart all along, s, I think, sufficiently clear. It is the simple truth that the more of such uniformities man can discover in Nature, the greater is the power that he wins for exploiting Nature for his ends, and protecting himself against her destroying powers. For the detection of such uniformities of sequence means the growing certainty as to what Nature will do in the future, and "forewarned is forearmed."

Once launched on this quest for laws, science proceeds after the same fashion as common sense did in forming the concept, that is to say it classifies things and processes into species, genera and laws, always seeking for the points in which phenomena resemble each other, and abstracting from, that is ignoring, the points in which they differ. The astonishing practical success of this generalising and abstracting method of thought is known to us all. Of countless illustrations that might be given my memory yields none more impressive than that given to me in my student days by observation of the working of a transit instrument. I went with other visitors to an observatory to the specialist in charge

of the transit instrument, and asked leave to see it in operation. Turning to a time-table which hung on the wall behind us, he informed us that in five minutes he would be able to show us a certain asteroid in transit. When the moment came there glided into the field of vision a tiny spot of silver, and slipped like a ghost across it. No Royal Express could have kept more accurate time. That is prediction carried to its highest power, and attained, strange to say, by that process of abstraction, the very exercise of which consists in knowing what facts to ignore. That represents science working as a special method within a sphere peculiarly adapted to its use. In astronomy the distances and magnitudes are so vast that any minor errors that may lie beyond the possibility of discovery by our most powerful telescopes and most accurate observations and calculations, do not affect the broad results.

Astronomical magnitudes at least appear to conform strictly to mathematical laws and determinism. Whether the apparent necessity has behind it any individuality or freedom lies quite beyond our ken. But beyond all question such individuality does appear, and increases the more we ascend from the material world into the world of living things, and most of all into the realm of human beings. It is a commonplace of the poets, and I do not know that it is questioned by the biologists, that no two living creatures are quite alike. Leibnitz tells the story¹ that "A clever gentleman of my acquaintance talking with me, in the presence of the Electress of Hanover, thought that he could easily find two

¹ Quoted by James Ward, *Realms of Ends*, p. 64.

leaves exactly alike. The Electress challenged him to do so, and he went up and down a long time seeking in vain." Some of us may have tried like experiments with like results. The same is true in greater degree with higher organisms. Complete resemblance between living things is never found. Only superficial observers think that it is. Closer observation always reveals some difference. A good hill shepherd can distinguish each of his sheep, and I have known them do this by touch alone. Twins that seem alike to strangers are rarely so to their own kindred. Most conclusive perhaps of all, to readers of detective romances at least, is the famous finger-print department in Scotland Yard, which rests entirely on the unqualified principle that every man has his own finger-print, which is different from that of every other person.¹ When we pass, finally, from the physical embodiment to the spiritual personality of human beings, the principle of the lonely individuality of each human being needs neither to be proved nor illustrated, for everyone admits its truth.

Now here is a fact which of itself refutes the idea that science is the only pathway to Reality. For the interest of science is not in individual beings at all, but in generalisations, concepts and laws. It does not, of course, completely ignore individuality. It notes its existence, but having done so, hurries on to that in which its interest really lies and which is its own domain, *i.e.* the characteristics which every individual has in common with all other

¹ The further truth that all these individual finger-prints can, up to a point, be classified and arranged because of their resemblances and that only by such grouping can the system be worked at all, illustrates the utility of science even in dealing with human beings.

individuals. Why does it do this? Because it is afraid of being choked and overwhelmed by the multitude of the individual things and characters in the world. It knows that it must practise economy of thought. It wishes to get clear concepts, which can only be got by dropping individual traits and for the time ignoring them. It wants concepts, laws and schemes which can all be got only by abstracting from individuality. But individuality is there, none the less, and all the time. To test the matter—*experimentum crucis*—try to give a strictly scientific definition of your most intimate friend. He belongs to the genus *homo sapiens*. Well that is something! He is, further, of the masculine gender. He is of your own nationality, of a fair complexion, of a certain height, weight and temperament, is a great mathematician, and so forth. All the way you have in the background the idea of a group like him, though growing less in number as you become more definite in your description. Now, however you may go on piling up the abstractions, you never get the real man. He is eluding you all the time you are speaking in general and abstract terms, and when at last you speak his proper name, instead of common nouns about him, a kind of knowledge leaps out of the mist that is not scientific knowledge at all because it is no longer abstract but intensely concrete and individual. It is like, and I believe it partly depends upon, the intuitive knowledge we have of our own personality. But that intuitive self-consciousness in the strict sense of the word is not scientific knowledge, it is the presupposition of all knowledge, of all feeling and all will.

The decisive proof that "Science is a net framed to catch certain kinds of fish and to let other fish through," and that one of these escapes is individuality, is found in the impossibility of writing any adequate human history in terms of pure science. Let us look again at Lord Acton's definition of science: "Science is the co-ordination of a great mass of similar facts into the form of a generalisation, a principle, or a law, which will enable us to predict with certainty the recurrence of events under like conditions." Now it is clear, to begin with, that human history is a part of reality. The experiences and achievements of human beings are, to say the least, as real as the movements of the planets. Yet it is equally plain that if a purely scientific history of any people were written in which the aim of the writer were what is here stated, namely the disclosure of uniform laws with a view to prediction of the future, the result would be a grotesque failure, utterly unlike the living and breathing tragic-comedy of human life. It would be only one degree more absurd to try to describe a day in the life of a man or woman in the formulæ of algebra. The methods which have been so triumphant in dealing with atoms or stars would break down in hopeless confusion in dealing with human life.

This is most obvious first of all in our complete inability to predict accurately the future of human action. We can predict and reckon upon the path of an asteroid, but who can predict the pathway of a man? What would not the cabinets of the great Powers and the little Ententes of to-day, what would not the Stock Exchanges of the world, give

for such knowledge? Yet all the economists and psychologists of the earth cannot give them such knowledge. The science of history is anything but complete because there is no power of accurate prediction. The endeavour has been made to meet this very obvious difficulty by saying that this is because the science of man is at present in its infancy, and an illustration has been suggested from the battlefield. We can tell from our present knowledge of cannon and explosives with remarkable accuracy just where a projectile will fall: as yet we cannot determine the path of the bursting fragments, but that uncertainty is due simply to the imperfection of our present knowledge, and the time will come when we shall be able to do this with absolute precision. So one day, by the pursuit of purely scientific methods it is claimed, we shall be able to predict with complete accuracy the life-pathway of every human being. Ideal science could do it, it is said, if given the time and the means of investigation. It has been the very nerve of our argument that science alone can never do it, because in the very centre of his personality every human being is free and individual, is unique in his kind, and so eludes all the meshes of the classifying and generalising methods of science, and science as we have seen takes little account of what is individual. Yet that does not imply that science has no work to do in explaining history. It can indeed greatly enrich history, for it is part of the paradox of human life that the individual can only attain his full personality in society and that he has very much in common with his kind. Every competent historian, therefore, must be expert in sociology, which is a

mixed science. He has to be able to weigh all that Maine and Maitland have to tell him of social groups and political and ecclesiastical institutions and all that the Marxians have to say about the economic evolution of the race and its influence upon religion and art. History is something more than the story of its personalities, obscure and heroic. But to ignore these, or, which is much the same thing, to make them mere automatic exponents of social tendencies and laws, is to make a dull caricature of the great epic of history. To attempt to write a purely scientific history, then, would be to flatten out and distort the whole subject, and to do the plainest violence to the reality, for the simple reason that individuality plays a far greater part in the course of human events than it does even in the sphere of biology. Individual men and women are unquestionably great and potent factors in the course of history. They are, moreover, creative figures. They bring something new into the field, not simply a re-arrangement of the old material. They cannot therefore be explained as instances of general laws. Mohammed, Joan, Luther, Napoleon, Lincoln, Florence Nightingale, what general laws can explain any one of them? Can the final truth about any one of them be given in abstract terms? Surely the idea is absurd. Yet if science gives us the final and all-determining word, how are we to evade this preposterous conclusion? Such figures refuse to be blended in the group. They pass easily through the meshes of all merely generalising thought, and by so doing each one of them is a demonstration of the inability of science to penetrate to the heart of reality. The great historian

has quite a different kind of intelligence from the great man of science. He needs, it is true, to have the same tenacious patience, thoroughness and generalising power, the power of seeing deep affinities and resemblances, where others see no connection whatever, but he needs also a far richer equipment of insight into individual human character, of imagination, and of the sense of the worth of human life. He needs these not simply for the embellishment of his subject but for penetrating the actual realities of his theme. The sphere of the man of science is man, but while the historian needs that kind of knowledge, he needs also to know men, and that I submit is quite a different thing. It is not too much to say, then, that the whole theory which we have been discussing in this chapter and which is the very corner stone of the Humanist thinking, breaks down on this fact alone, that it cannot adequately explain human history. For some time many believed that it could. Scientific thought has been pressing through the realm of biology into history and seeking to resolve it all into historical sociology. That it has accomplished much here that needed to be done has already been fully admitted. So recently as a quarter of a century ago Professor James Ward, in a masterly review of the whole field covered by his earlier book on *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, could state the position as follows: "We have only to think of comparing some classical work of science—say Newton's *Principia*—with one of history—as for example Clarendon's *Great Rebellion*—to realise completely the diversity of the two realms (namely of Nature and History). Regarding the scientific

idea of Nature as a rounded whole, we may say that the world of science and the world of history have little or nothing in common. Their terminology, their categories, and their products are wholly different, and so too are the philosophical questions to which they severally and immediately give rise. The one never reaches the individual and concrete, the other never leaves them."¹ Dr Ward, in this introductory chapter, was summarising a very full argument in a very few pages, and in such compression may have overstated his own position. Yet I hardly think that to-day even those who most deeply share his main conviction, that human individuality eludes the generalising and abstract nature of science, would use the closing words as fairly describing the present position. But just as biology reacted most potently on the older sciences by showing the insufficiency of their categories to explain the new phenomena of life, so, if I rightly read the situation, is the invasion of history by science and the comparative method reacting most potently on that transformed science.

It is quite unbelievable that the sole final reality behind the great drama of human story is the endless grouping and re-grouping of space-time patterns moving without purpose or meaning according to certain mathematical laws. Yet if Nature be a closed system, and if the fundamental system be physics, there can be no escape from that conclusion. And on that view, it must be said, in that weird world of ultimate scientific abstraction, Cromwell differs from Napoleon, and both from Jesus Christ,

¹ *Realms of Ends*, p. 2.

only as one space-time pattern may differ from another.

The more honestly the historian faces the full realities of history, the more faithfully he uses the scientific method to explain all that it can legitimately explain, the more will it become overwhelmingly clear that science can never explain more than an aspect or a fraction of the whole, and that the endeavour to make it do so leads to mere caricature. Our greater historians are neither fanatics nor pedants, but men with some sense of reality, and so we may look with hope to the progress and the study of history, and also to the "calibration" of the methods whereby we study history.

Mr H. G. Wood has summed up the position in a paragraph in his recent excellent volume on *Christianity and the Nature of History*. "The history of historiography in the nineteenth century is largely taken up with attempts to develop history as a science on the analogy of the physical sciences. In the twentieth century historians have come to realise that such attempts must necessarily fail. Beyond the realm of scientific generalisations, the realm of relatively stable factors in human nature and its environment, the realm of measurable repetition, lies the realm of personality, of concrete events and causes, of the particular, the non-repeatable and non-predictable, and the historian cannot accomplish his work without taking account of this latter realm. His task is to trace the development of a unique story, not to discover illustrations of general laws."

III

There is another result of this "calibration" of scientific method which seems to me of possibly great importance for the reconciliation of the scientific and the religious and ethical view of the world of human life.

The aim of all science is, as we have seen, to discover law and uniformity in all natural processes, and so to win complete accuracy of description and prediction, and thereby mastery over Nature. The classical expression of this aim is found in Laplace's *Essay on Probability*. After dismissing free will as a simple illusion, Laplace proceeds: "We ought then to regard the present state of the universe as the effect of its antecedent state, and as the cause of the state that is to follow. An intelligence who for a given instant should be acquainted with all the forces by which Nature is animated, and with the several positions of the beings composing it, if, further, his intellect were vast enough to submit these data to analysis, would include in one and the same formula the movements of the largest bodies in the universe, and those of the lightest atom. Nothing would be uncertain for him; the future as well as the past would be present to his eyes. . . . The human mind in the perfection it has been able to give to astronomy affords a feeble outline of such an intelligence. Its discoveries in mechanics and in geometry, joined to that of universal gravitation, have brought it within reach of comprehending, in the same analytical expression, the past and future states of the systems of the world. . . . All its

efforts in the search for truth tend to approximate it without limit to the intelligence we have just imagined.”¹

It is clear that Laplace is thinking of Nature as a closed system, and also essentially as a material system, every part of which is determined by measurable forces. Nothing, therefore, which happens within the causal system can be influenced or changed by any power, divine or human, that is not part of “Nature.” Man’s body, nervous system and brain being part of this closed system of physical Nature must be as rigidly determined as the movements of the planets and the tides.

Now, not only does such a scheme of thought deny the freedom of God; it is a complete negation of human freedom as well. The debate between believers in necessity and freedom is ancient and inveterate and continues in our own day. But the determinism of most of the philosophers of to-day is what has been called “soft determinism.” This variety of determinism holds that we are determined only by our own characters in reaction with our environment, and may, therefore, be called self-determined. But the determinism of Naturalism is what is called “hard determinism,” or fatalism. It holds that every thought and feeling and volition is determined by the mechanism of our brains and bodies, and that these are simply so many cogs in the wheels of the great world-machine. To demonstrate this, and nothing less than this, is the aim of science as conceived by Laplace and by all naturalistic thinkers, and their great support has been the Newtonian science.

¹ Quoted by James Ward, *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, vol. i, p. 4.

Kepler, Galileo and Newton, it is true, never dreamed of such consequences being drawn from the system of scientific thought which they framed. They limited their methods to certain regions of the physical universe. But as the eighteenth century wore on, and science grew in boldness with its wonderful achievements, the prescient genius of Kant discerned whither it was tending. Laplace wrote his famous essay in 1812. Just thirty-one years earlier Kant wrote his *Critique of Pure Reason*, and within the next decennium completed the triad of *Critiques* from which nearly all the later idealist philosophy takes its origin. Kant's aim, and in general that of his successors, was to oppose the hard determinism which was already appearing on the horizon, and to assert the freedom and rights of the human spirit.

Kant's solution of the problem, with its two worlds of the phenomenal or apparent, and the real, or noumenal, is well known. The former is the sphere of the pure reason, and by this he meant in effect the Newtonian science, the latter is the world of the practical reason, or morality, with its postulates, God, freedom and immortality. Later idealistic thought has in the main held with Kant that, inasmuch as the spiritual world was the real world, the world of science was of only relative validity, and so has not taken the fatalistic conclusions of naturalistic science too seriously. Scientists, as has been said, have for the most part, heeded the philosophers very little and have gone on their own road seeking to extend their generalisations and develop their own methods. They have, on the whole, ignored

philosophy, or when they did philosophise, have either tended to Naturalism or have taken a definitely religious view of life. The strength of the naturalistic argument lay in the domain of physics and astronomy, in which the mechanistic case seemed to be established, not only by the width and grandeur of its generalisations, but the precision of their verification. Laplace, it will be seen from the words quoted, based his faith that one day scientific knowledge would establish the reign of determinism throughout the universe, upon what it had already done in astronomy, mechanics and geometry, and in particular in establishing the law of universal gravitation. And in another famous address, given sixty years after that by Laplace, the great Berlin physiologist Du Bois Raymond, attaching his argument to that of Laplace says: "As the astronomer predicts the day on which, after many years, a comet again appears in the vault of heaven from the depths of space, so this 'mind' (*i.e.* the mind of the Laplacian calculator) would read in its equations the day when the Greek Cross will glitter from the mosques of Sophia, or when England will burn its last lump of coal."¹

Starting from this apparently secure base of operations the new sciences of biology, sociology and psychology advanced to the demonstration of deterministic causation and law in these new fields, and to it they have always returned for new confidence. Seeing that physics and astronomy lay at the very basis of all other sciences, it could not

¹ Also quoted by Ward, *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, vol. i, p. 42, and more fully by Lange, *History of Materialism*, vol. ii, p. 308.

but be that these too could be brought within the sway of mechanical causation. Here is the ground for the confidence with which Laplace dismissed man's belief in free will and responsibility as a mere illusion. It is in no way surprising that the attempt should have been made and sustained. Nor need we wonder that the defence should have been equally stubborn. For if free will be an illusion men may very naturally ask what confidence they may henceforward have in any conviction which they possess. It is clear that all men of goodwill know that they ought to do certain things and blame themselves when they do not. A scientific man knows, for instance, that he ought to be unreservedly loyal to truth, and blames himself if he allows any personal motive of gain or fear to divert him from seeking and speaking it. Yet it is also surely clear that if we are absolutely determined to every thought and volition by the mechanism of our brain, then the words "ought" and "blame" express mere illusions. The fatalist may be able to drug his own conscience in this way for a time, but he will most certainly blame other people who shirk their duty to truth or treat him with cruelty and injustice. In other words, he will judge them as people possessing free will. So the battle has gone on between naturalistic thinkers entrenched in physics and astronomy, and those who believed in their own self-knowledge and the validity of their moral convictions. Meantime science has gone on with its investigations and the refining of its methods, and as it has done so it has made a disquieting discovery. It was believed that the whole vast structure of physical and

astronomical nature could be explained as a completely closed system of causes and effects, as Newtonian science put it, or otherwise as a system of unbroken uniformity of process. From the atom to the planet, from the planet to the galaxy, from the galaxy to the astronomical universe this great system of determinism persisted unbroken throughout all space, and throughout all time; it had come down phase after phase in unbroken sequence. But as physical science pursued its triumphant course into the nature of light, heat and electricity, it was led on into the sub-atomic world, and as the science of thermodynamics came into being, revolutionary changes began to happen. It was declared that what by its very name, the atom, was declared to be indivisible, was really a system of smaller units of electric energy, electrons, protons, neutrons and so on. Moreover, it was discovered from the study of the radiation of heat, light and electricity, that many of the phenomena could only be explained on the assumption that these forms of energy were not radiated in continuous waves as had been the prevailing view, but, as it were, in jerks, or packets of energy, like a stream of bullets rather than waves. Each of these packets was called a Quantum. The apparition of the quantum has had a most disturbing effect not only upon the existing theories of wave motion, and the structure of the atom, but on the conception of the "Laws of Nature" and the whole theory of mechanical determinism. For whatever may be true of the large-scale physical phenomena "strict determinism cannot be traced in the behaviour of the ultimate elements of the physical

world." "The behaviour of a quantum of light, as, for example, in which of two directions it will go, is found to be a matter of probabilities. In one experiment the quantum will choose one path. In a repetition of the experiment repeated under identical conditions it will choose the other path. If the experiment be repeated a great number of times, the percentage of the times the quantum chooses one path or the other can be reckoned up. It is then possible to enunciate a law specifying the probability that in any given occasion the quantum will take one path or the other. The same holds good of the motion of an electron. The chance that it will reach position A can be given. But its future conduct is not uniquely determined by its present state. When a sufficiently large number of electrons are taken, as happens in any piece of matter with which science deals, their individual idiosyncrasies cancel out, as it were, and the resultant behaviour of the assembly is determined."¹ In this passage there emerges the conception of statistical law. All the laws of the new science of thermodynamics are, I believe, of this statistical character. They describe the way in which great aggregates of very small units behave. Actuaries are very familiar with such statistical laws. At first sight our vast modern insurance business must seem to take insane risks. No single human being knows the day of his own death. If he were to venture on a wager of any amount with another man on that event he would be regarded as a reckless gambler or a mere fool.

¹ J. W. N. Sullivan, "The Physical Nature of the Universe" in *The Outline of Science*, p. 110.

Yet you will find scores of insurance companies in the world to-day prepared to take on just such a wager with you, and what seems more reckless still, with as many other takers as will deposit with them a small annual stake or premium. And the directors of these companies are about the last people whom we would call either gamblers or fools. What lies behind this paradox? Oddly enough what saves them from ruin is their apparently reckless desire not only to take on a wager with you, but to take on all comers. To take on an insurance wager with you alone would be little better than a gamble, but to take it on with a multitude is safe and far-seeing business. Indeed it is found to be true that the greater the number of wagers the surer are the profits. Now the principles on which actuaries work are not causal laws at all. They are all based on the observed fact that while some people live short lives and some live long lives, the average becomes more and more constant the greater the number of lives that enter into the computation. There is freedom, variety and individuality to an indefinite degree among the units, but there is a limit to this freedom. They oscillate to and fro above and below a line, but in experience the oscillations above the line tend to cancel out those below and the line remains more or less constant. The average constants are the principles on which the actuaries work. They are statistical laws. In our day, as is well known, there has been a great extension of insurance. We can take out policies not only for life and fire, but for all kinds of risks, burglars, sickness, accident, and so on. Yet in spite of this we are persuaded

that we are free agents in the fullest sense of the term. But, as we all realise, our freedom is limited, and it is on the facts of this limitation and the multitude of policy holders that modern insurance depends. Neither actuaries nor directors give a thought in the way of business to necessitarian theories of how this singular tendency of one variation to cancel out another comes about. They can get on perfectly well without them. They are content with the observed facts.

Now something like this is what has happened in science. Just as our insurance system has grown up on a developing system of statistical principles, so thermodynamics has grown up on statistical laws which were discovered to be true of aggregates of apparently undetermined units and quanta of energy. Different as these quanta are from free human agents in most particulars, there is an odd analogy between them too, which justifies Dr Oman in saying that Quantum Theory "suggests that Nature from the beginning individualises itself, and that mind with its centre of meaning and its relation to the universe by its own understanding and action is not a mere incursion into its order."¹ Moreover, the question has arisen whether a very large part of what have hitherto been supposed to be "iron" laws of Nature, that is to say laws of the rigorous determinate type, are not really statistical. Eddington's account of the matter is that formerly all the great laws of physics and astronomy were believed to be strict causal laws of the type contemplated by Laplace and Du Bois Raymond, but that with the rise and growth of thermodynamics

¹ *The Natural and the Supernatural*, p. 249.

the conception of statistical law came into prominence as a secondary type of law, and more and more it has been supplanting the older type, even in those regions in which the classical laws reigned supreme. Instead of being regarded as causal laws they are many of them regarded as being simply limiting cases of statistical laws. That is to say, any exceptions to them are so improbable that they may conventionally be taken as invariable without any danger.¹

Now it cannot be denied that the scientific picture of the world here outlined is very different from that imagined by Laplace and Du Bois Raymond and the science of their time. In that older world of thought human free will and active intervention in the system of Nature seemed something as alien as a rock in the sky. Strict causation and a closed system of Nature are in absolute contradiction with a free human will freely controlling its own bodily actions.

But within a world of statistical laws there may

¹ The passage is so important that I give it verbatim: "But, further, it is now recognised that the classical laws of mechanics and electromagnetism (including the modifications introduced by relativity theory) are simply the limiting form of Quantum Theory, when the number of quanta or particles concerned is very large. This connection is known as Bohr's Correspondence Principle. The classical laws are not a fresh set of laws, but are a particular adaptation of the Quantum laws. We have already mentioned that it is when a very large number of individuals are concerned that the prediction of the secondary scheme has a high probability approaching certainty. That is how they come to be mistaken for causal laws whose operation is definitely certain. Now that their statistical character is recognised they are lost to the primary scheme. When Laplace put forward his ideal of a completely deterministic scheme he thought he had already the nucleus of such a scheme in the laws of mechanics and astronomy. That nucleus has now been transferred to the second scheme. Nothing is left to the old causal scheme and we have not yet found the beginnings of a new one." *New Pathways in Science*, pp. 77-78.

be a very real human freedom and activity just as there is room for the play of individuality, passion and action within a workable system of life insurance. A world system under which there was room for both a limited measure of indeterminism in the units and certainty as to the aggregates would seem to be a system in which there would be room for a limited freedom and initiative, and also for inveterate habit on the part of individual human beings.

The point at which the Laplacian system seemed to trench most drastically on human freedom was the mysterious point where man's brain and mind appeared to meet. That this was the case was plain from the extraordinary crop of parallelist theories which sprang up in the closing years of the nineteenth century¹ when the materialist conception of Nature was at its zenith. The difficulty was on that view to find any place at all for the mind and will, and even for the consciousness of man. If everything physical were part of a closed and rigidly determined system of causes and effects, then the entire conscious life of man was a kind of accidental and inexplicable accompaniment. If every motion of the body could be completely explained by its physical antecedents, then there was no need for consciousness or for will or for thought. Yet every writer of natural history spoke of pleasure and pain as factors in evolution, and common sense refused to believe that a man's will could not move his body, and it was impossible to believe that the truth of an argument depended upon molecular changes in the brains of the arguers

¹ Enumerated in Prof. MacDougall's *Body and Mind*.

and not on its own merits. Hence there arose the incredible theories that the two processes of material changes in the brain and of consciousness ran on parallel to each other, corresponding point for point but never meeting or interacting. The motive for this, as I have said, was the preserving at all costs of the closed physical system knit together by strict causality, and the incredibility of the parallelist theories is to my mind a *reductio ad absurdum* of the "closed system" theory.

Have the new theories of the indeterminacy of the units of energy and the statistical constancy of the aggregates thrown any new light on this problem? Eddington believes that they have, but his argument, it should be observed, does not, as some think, depend only on his belief in the indeterminacy of the units of electric energy of which the cells of the brain are the aggregates. The basal indeterminism of these units, if I understand him rightly, makes it possible for the mind to influence the brain, seeing that in the units of which it is composed there is no causal nexus to break or alter. Now were the brain mere dead matter the influence of mind would be inappreciable. It would be overwhelmed and swamped by the statistical average laws. But the living brain is not a mere aggregate. It is a unity corresponding to the unity of the mind. It is an organised whole organised so that it is peculiarly susceptible to the influence of the mind.

Bergson has a conception of the human brain and nervous system not unlike this. "When we consider," he says, "the mechanism of voluntary movement in particular, the functioning of the nervous system in general, and in fact life itself

in what is essential to it, we are led to the conclusion that the invariable contrivance of consciousness, from its most humble origin in elementary living forms, is to convert physical determinism to its own ends, or rather to elude the law of conservation of energy whilst obtaining from matter a fabrication of explosives ever intenser and more utilisable. It will then require an almost negligible action, such as the light pressure of the finger on the hair trigger of a pistol, in order to liberate at the required moment in the direction chosen as great an amount as is wanted of accumulated energy. The glycogen lodged in the muscles is in fact a real explosive, by its voluntary movement is accomplished; to make and use explosive of this kind seems to be the unvarying and essential preoccupation of life, from its first apparition in protoplasmic mass, deformable at will, to its complete expansion in organisms capable of free actions.”¹

Now if all this reasoning is sound it is clear that Laplace's conception is unattainable. The admission of free will, as James Ward said thirty years ago in his great book *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, “lets contingency into the heart of the physical universe” as well as into history. And if man be free to influence and change the course of events, it seems certain also that, to say the least of it, God should have a like freedom. This, as we shall see, is as vitally important for religion as the freedom of man is for morality.

But is the case proved? It is well known to all who have followed the discussion that there is a sharp division of opinion on the matter among our fore-

most masters of physical science, Einstein, Rutherford and Planck (the discoverer of the Quantum) and others being on the one side, and Jeans, Eddington, Weyl and others on the other. The former hold fast to the older view of causality and rigorous determinism. They urge that the apparent indeterminism of the electrons and quanta is due simply to our ignorance, and that if we knew more about them we should find them as determinate in all their movements as the large-scale aggregates of these elements. It is of course impossible either to prove or disprove this view, and the Heisenberg Principle of Uncertainty, one of the more notable discoveries of sub-atomic physics, in effect means that we can never know. I do not think it is at all unfair to say that the conviction of this eminent group of men of science is due to philosophic faith rather than to observational science. Eddington's argument is that, so far as the actual practice of scientific method is concerned, all the laws of Nature¹ that were originally regarded as

¹ Eddington's language in 1933 is stronger than it was in 1925. In his essay on "The Domain of Physical Science," in the volume *Religion, Science and Reality*, he distinguishes between the great "field laws," the law of gravitation, the law of conservation of mass and energy, the laws of electric and magnetic force, and the conservation of electric charge and other laws. He says that "violations of these laws are inconceivable," and distinguishes between them and the statistical laws such as "the laws of gases and thermodynamics, which deal with crowds rather than individuals." Eight years later he uses more uncompromising language. In an article in *Philosophy*, vol. viii, he writes as follows: "The dual source of regularity (*i.e.* the absolute causal laws of the older science and the new statistical group laws) is no longer accepted. The changes that have occurred in the fundamental conceptions of physics in the last ten years have brought it about that all the observed regularities are now attributed to the second group—all the primary determinate laws have disappeared. The result of an analysis of physical phenomenon up to the present is that we have nowhere found any evidence of determinate law."

causal laws, have in the ordinary practice of scientific method been transferred to the category of statistical laws. His opponents, so far as I have been able to discover, do not question this, but say that if we knew all we should find that underlying all these, there are causal laws. If we knew all, even about the quantum, we should find strict mechanical determinism. Eddington's reply is that inasmuch as we admittedly have no proof of this; that as on the one hand the whole work of physical science can be carried on more efficiently in practice without assuming determinism; and that on the other we are immediately conscious of our own freedom and responsibility, the continued assertion of the old determinism is entirely gratuitous.

We may freely grant that, however this scientific debate be determined, it will not solve the whole problem of free will and necessity. The controversy does not directly touch the philosophical issue between free will and what William James has called "soft determinism," that is to say, the determinism which says that all our actions are necessitated by the reaction of our character on our environment. The difference between "hard" and "soft" determinism is that in the former view we are necessitated by that which is without, and in the latter by that which is within ourselves, uncoiling itself like a spring. In neither case can we think of man as having real freedom of choice. Nor does the controversy deal with the philosophic questions as to what may lie behind the indeterministic results of science which it formulates in its statistical laws. There may be a background there which, if we could reach it, would show us

if not mechanical causality, yet purpose and final reason behind the apparent chaos of indeterminate units.

But this, I think, we can say with confidence, that the Laplacian mechanical determinism can no longer claim the support of physical science. Freely following its own star this has in practice discarded the old causal laws for statistical methods, and by so doing has put that particular argument for hard determinism definitely out of action.

But if it is out of action as against the freedom of man, it is out of action also as against the freedom of God. If it is no longer possible to say that Nature according to science is a rigidly closed system of mechanical causation which excludes the possibility of man in his freedom changing the "natural" course of events, it seems to me that it is no longer possible to say that it is irrational to hold that God may not change the "natural" course of events, if on other grounds we have good and sufficient reason to suppose that He has done so. On the religious interpretation of the world, Nature is the divine "instrument" which God uses for spiritual ends. The function of science is to tell us all that it can about this instrument. But no one who believes in the transcendence of God can ever accept the world view of Laplace. "Whoever holds the notion of the living God as paramount can never maintain that exact acquaintance with His instruments is enough to make plain all that God will do or suffer to be done."¹

No religious man can be satisfied with a view of the universe in which God is regarded as the

¹ James Ward, *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, vol. i, p. 43.

creator of the Laplacian world, even though we tack immortality on to it at the end. The Deism of the eighteenth century tried it, but did not last. Under it the system of Nature usurps the place of the living God and speedily becomes the ultimate Reality. It is reported that when Laplace himself was asked by Napoleon what place God had in this system, he replied, "Sire, I have no need of that hypothesis." The believing man, therefore, need have no regrets that the system of hard determinism is disappearing from science.

IV

There is yet another point at which the process of "calibration" of the instruments of which I have spoken affects the power of science to give us that final account of the universe claimed for it by Naturalism. It explains what Mr Collingwood means by saying that "science is not knowledge" but "supposition." I should prefer to put the matter much more guardedly and say that in its very nature science can only give us partial knowledge.

The Victorian men of science, of whom the older Huxley was a typical representative, in their contentings with the traditional religious thought of the day, made much of the fact that whereas the religious interpretation of life was essentially a prejudiced view, science was absolutely impartial and disinterested and therefore incomparably more worthy of credence. As we have seen, the Humanist books of to-day repeat that charge to weariness. All religion and all idealist philosophy are tarred with

the same brush, they are forms of "wishful thinking." Science alone is absolutely unimpassioned and neutral.

Now is this really the case? It is no doubt true of a large part of scientific procedure. The true man of science must be constantly on his guard and practise the most rigorous self-discipline in observing, classifying and generalising the facts and laws with which he has to do. He has to be scrupulously just to all the relevant facts, even the most baffling and annoying facts. How high and austere is the standard of science in this respect needs no assertion. It has indeed raised the whole standard of human knowledge in every department of learning and of thought, and not least in the realm of religion. But behind and beneath the rigorous use of the inductive method the true man of science has one deeply rooted conviction which sustains the impartiality of method, and that is the belief or faith or prejudice that Nature is orderly in all her processes. If he comes on some hard problem, which after repeated efforts he cannot solve or bring within the order which he has discovered, he never blames Nature or supposes that he has caught her wandering from her uniform way. It never occurs to him that he may have run into a patch of disorder within the world order. He blames himself alone and recoils only to spring again. If he fails again and again, still he never thinks of blaming Nature; he is sure that Nature is orderly throughout, and a desire to prove that in this case, as in all the rest, there is an explanation somewhere, impels him on in restless labours until the solution is found. That motive sustains

all the vast labours of science throughout humanity to-day. If that strange conviction that Nature is orderly throughout were shaken, it would kill science. If the poison gas of doubt about the ultimate order of Nature once got into our laboratories and observatories, it would bring them all into a slumber of death. Now, how does man come by this all-impelling conviction? It is perfectly clear that it is not by any kind of demonstrative proof. The whole of existing science has come from the endeavour to demonstrate that which men have somehow come to believe independently of and prior to that demonstration. Nobody has explored anything but a fraction of Nature, yet science approaches every new region with the pre-supposition that however confused it may seem to be, there is order behind the confusion, and that it is her business to discover it. How do we come by that faith? The Humanist is not in a position to say that we have an intuitive or a *a priori* conviction on the point. Perhaps we have, but in that case science cannot be the sole pathway to Reality; the mind must have independent sources of practical certainty without which science could not even begin to be. But that I think is not a theory which Naturalism or Humanism can afford to admit. Indeed I see on that naturalistic basis of Humanism nothing for it but to describe this profoundly important prejudice in favour of order to a simple act of will. It is a postulate and not an axiom. Therefore, as Mr Collingwood has said, all science rests to begin with on an unproved supposition. But man cannot will anything persistently without some practical motive. There is certainly an

æsthetic interest involved in pure science, an alluring but austere beauty in scientific demonstration, and so there is an insatiable desire to discover this beauty. It is plain also that there is a practical interest of a very comprehensive kind. Man's interest is, obviously, that the world should be orderly, for only if it be so can he foresee what Nature is going to do, and only so can he describe it in terms of human thought so that he and his fellow-men can share a common knowledge, foreknowledge and mastery. But again, if all this be true, what becomes of the purely disinterested nature claimed for science? It is absurd to say that morality and faith are vitiated by being interested, while science alone is pure and disinterested and therefore alone to be trusted, when all the later rigorous impartiality of the investigation is sustained by the desire to demonstrate that which the investigator greatly desires to be true—the orderliness of the natural world. This becomes plain when we remember the exultation with which the great advances of science of our own time have always been hailed by the intelligent public. They give mankind a new sense that it is winning in its long battle with Nature, and this does not apply only to the triumphs of science that revolutionise the practical arts like that of healing, but to purely theoretical conquests which are verified by Nature, like the discoveries of Einstein. What, then, are the proximate aims of science in making this fundamental supposition or postulate of universal order in Nature? ~~The modern analysis of the scientific method of which I have spoken reduces~~ these aims to two—the description of Nature and

the power of predicting what Nature will do. All science sets out to give, first of all, a coherent description of the immensely complicated world of phenomena, which is ever sweeping around and over man like a moving panorama over which he has no control, but which has terrible control over him. We may compare him to a slave at the mercy of a formidable master who can award pleasure and pain, life and death to him at his sovereign will. In such a case it is obviously of vital importance that the slave should be able to give to himself and his fellow-slaves in like case some intelligible understanding and description of his master's motives and methods, in order that they may foresee what he is going to do next. If slaves are not to be utterly helpless and passive, they have got to make some kind of sense of the way in which their master acts. Now so long as Nature is a mere complex of "happenings," and all her processes "the mere drift of cosmic weather, doing and undoing without end," as William James has called it, there can be neither understanding nor description nor foresight. Men must remain permanently mere victims, and they cannot get together and co-operate either to please or master their tyrant. The first great step is to find out if there is any intelligible method or order in the beatings or in the gifts which their master bestows upon them. They make, then, that primary vital supposition, they assume that there is order. The next step is to find out what that order is. They have to find it in rough outline, and they have to describe it to themselves and to each other before they can get any farther out of the helpless prison

of their servitude. What they need is something more, however, than description. It must be a kind of description which will enable them to foresee what he is going to do next. Description and prediction, then, impelled by the will to live, these are the aims of all men's common-sense knowledge of Nature, and all science grows out of such lowly beginnings, for it is, of course, simply an immense expansion and refinement of such common-sense knowledge.

To sum up what has been said under this head, the whole structure of science rests thus upon a postulate or supposition, for which so far as Naturalism goes no justification can be given except that for practical reasons man has postulated or demanded it, because he needed it badly. Experience has proved that it has worked, and we may hope that it will work still indefinitely. But how do we know that it will always work? There may, for aught we know, be regions in the vast physical universe beyond mathematics. Quantum Theory and the principle of indeterminacy are reminders that continuity and general law may not give a final account of that universe, and that uniform order may not explain everything even in the physical world. The difficulties in which in this region science finds itself to-day, the necessity in which it finds itself of using two different and apparently incompatible conceptions of the nature of energy, and meantime of going on with both, are a sharp reminder of the danger of taking for granted that as yet even its fundamental conceptions give us any full and adequate account of reality.

We have already seen good reason to believe that

there may be room in the universe for freedom as well as necessity, regions in which the postulate of universal uniformity of law is no longer valid. Had it been an axiom that everything that happened in the physical universe was subject to uniformity, then all our apparent sense of freedom and responsibility must be treated as illusion. But it is altogether different with a postulate. We use it experimentally and not dogmatically. We carry it as far as it will fairly go. But if there are facts which it cannot explain, it must yield to the facts.

Yet again if it is lawful and right to postulate cosmic order as the basis of science, why should it be unlawful and wrong to postulate moral order in the universe as the basis of all moral action? I shall endeavour in the following chapter to show that such an order is as necessary to the validity of our moral convictions as the order of Nature is to the validity of science. But it may be that both the cosmic and the moral orders which are impersonal systems are taken up into a freer, larger personal system.

The cumulative result of all this self-criticism of science has been such as to make us feel that we cannot expect to find in it a complete or even a momentarily satisfactory explanation of the great riddle of the world. It ignores too much ever to be able to explain this infinitely rich and varied universe. So much we can surely already see from a simple analysis of the scientific method. The truth is that if we carry the naturalistic version of science clear through to its ultimate issues, it must end in

scepticism. For what is the account of the scientific reason given by evolutionary Naturalism but this, that it is an instrument formed by the human race to enable it to survive in the struggle for existence. It does not give us truth, it gives us only what it is supremely useful for us to believe to be true. In all our reasoning in this chapter we are not on this view seeking the truth, we are in quest of a mere utility, and this applies to every kind of knowledge whatsoever. Truth is inaccessible, or non-existent. All that we can ever attain with all our striving after realities are utilities. Such are the conclusions of Pragmatism, and to me at least that is only a refined form of scepticism. A very large part of the interest and vitality of the quest for truth, truth at all costs, would at once fade out of human life and human thought if mankind were to become persuaded that there was no such thing as truth or reality, only utility, nor would the situation in any way be saved, even if the utility were not personal but racial utility. And to me if Naturalism be true, not only such great names as duty and goodness and virtue, but truth itself must all be merged in the one devouring category of utility in the struggle for existence.

I cannot but believe that if science is to maintain its splendour it must find some other philosophy than this which arrogates to itself the name of the philosophy of science. It needs for its basis something or Some One in Whom is a reality above the battle of utilities, Who has so made the human intelligence, that like the human heart, it is "restless until it finds its rest in Him." Science, in a word, for its stability and honour, needs either God

or "something very like Him." In the disinterested love of the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth of the man of science we have a form of the love of God, and therefore the conflict between science and religion is only apparent and transitional. Science needs religion for its basis too much to be permanently alienated from it. On the other hand that religion needs science who that realises the gains that science has brought to religion can doubt? What Christian would be willing to abandon the new vision of the greatness, wisdom and power of God which the science of the past centuries has already brought to Faith? What enlightened Christian would be willing to go back to the old three-storied universe of our forefathers, with its six thousand years of human history? For there is truth in Seeley's eloquent protest that our religion to-day greatly needs the help that science can give it to think more worthily of the glory of God: "In too many Christians the idea of God has been degraded by childish and little-minded teaching; the Eternal, the Infinite and the All-embracing has been represented as the head of the clerical interest, as a sort of clergyman, as a sort of schoolmaster, as a sort of philanthropist. But the scientific man *knows* Him to be Eternal; in astronomy, in geology, he becomes familiar with the countless milleniums of His lifetime. The scientific man strains his mind actually to realise God's infinity. As far off as the fixed stars he traces Him 'distance inexpressible by numbers that have name.'"¹ This is most true. Science has given us a new manifestation of the greatness of

¹ Seeley's *Natural Religion*, pp. 19, 20.

the universe, and some new apprehension thereby of the greatness, the wisdom and the power of Him who made it. Religion cannot do without it. It is impossible to receive the new revelation of the wisdom and greatness of God without seeking a greater idea of His character, His purity and His love.

The new knowledge of God which has come to us through science should surely bring with it to all men and women who believe in Him already the desire to win some new knowledge of His grace commensurate with that splendour of wisdom and power. But to speak of that at this point would be to anticipate a later stage of our argument ; and for that we have not yet secured an adequate ground.

IV

THE MORAL PATHWAY TO REALITY

IF the argument of the last chapter has been sound, it is clear that in its very nature science can never give us a final account or explanation even of the world of Nature. Still less can it explain human history because of its greater freedom. There is no real science of history in the strict sense of the term. That science deals with realities, and that it deals with them with extraordinary efficiency, and that, therefore, we must take full account of what it tells us of Reality in any further synthesis, is of course beyond question, but that the Humanist endeavour to make it the final arbiter must in the very nature of the case lead to a mutilated and distorted picture of the marvellous and abundant world, seems to me plain. The way is therefore open to us for exploring other pathways to Reality in the endeavour to solve the fundamental riddle of the world.

To that riddle Humanism, as we have seen, gives us no answer. It disposes of it by denying our right to ask and our power to answer the question: Why does the world exist? What is its meaning? All the other questions, What? How? When? Where? are lawful and to be encouraged. But the most fundamental of them all, "Wherefore?" is an unlawful question. There is no road that way. We have seen the reason given for this veto.

Science is the sole pathway to Reality, and science excludes all things that cannot be measured, and therefore all values and purposes when we seek to use them as keys to the mystery. To do so is to be guilty of anthropomorphism. As if science itself were not riddled with anthropomorphism ! Whence do we get our conceptions of substance, of causality, of law, but from our own human nature, substance from our consciousness of self, causality from our will, law from our experience of society ? And is it not the conception of substance that is behind the questions, "What ?" and "Where ?" the conception of causality that is behind the question, "How did this event come to pass ?" the conception of law and recurrent uniformity that is behind the question, "When may I expect the sun to rise, to be eclipsed, to set ?" Whence does the fundamental prejudice of science in favour of the order of Nature come, save from a judgment of value and a deep prevision that Nature is not really alien to man, but that if he could understand her she would be found to be on his side ? And how astonishingly fruitful the asking of these anthropomorphic questions has proved ! Suppose man had not interrogated Nature with his "What ?" "Where ?" "How ?" and "When ?" where would he have been to-day ? Why should he not ask the deepest question of all ? Why should he not dare to say "Why ?" Nothing but a mere dogma stands in the way, the dogma that science is the only pathway to Reality. We have, I believe, seen good cause to believe that this dogma is groundless, and stand face to face once more with the perennial riddle of the world.

I propose now to show that not only is science unable, by reason of its self-imposed limitations, to explain the world of Nature and of human life, but that when, in spite of this, we try to do it we mutilate and distort the facts. Just as plain facts can verify any theory, so no theory can stand if the facts are plainly against it. Our argument is that the scientific approach can explain neither the manifest beauty of the universe nor the story of man's religion nor his fundamental moral convictions, and that the endeavour to force these into harmony with it leads to their utter distortion. I believe that each of these is a pathway to Reality as well as science, and that the exploring of each of them will help us towards the solution of the fundamental problem of the meaning of the world. I do not in these lectures propose to explore them all with any thoroughness, but to take as typical the last of these, as I think it is that pathway that to-day makes the broadest appeal to the largest number of serious men and women. It is not easy to-day, when everything is questioned, and the tendency is to make everything relative, to get a moral formula which everybody of intelligence and goodwill will recognise to be universally true. But I imagine that few will question the principle that every human being ought always to do the best that he knows. There are two elements in this statement. The first is that every one of us carries about with him what a distinguished Victorian writer called "a scale of values in the soul." We have something in us, some inner standard according to which we grade alternative courses of action as higher or lower, as the case may be. This scale

is not confined to moralities. What is it that makes a painter move continually to and fro, back and forth, before his painting, tentatively putting in and rubbing out his colours? There is something within him approving or condemning his execution till at last it says to him, "That will do." What is it that makes the poet try phrase and rhythm till at last the inexorable monitor is appeased? What is it that makes the scientific discoverer restlessly try and test hypothesis after hypothesis and experiment after experiment until something within him says decisively, "That is the truth"? Clearly within the mind and soul of man there is always some scale and standard. Even so, when we are face to face with some plain moral alternative of honour or meanness, of fairness or oppression, of selfishness or love, there is something within us which says, "This is good," or "This is bad," or "This is the better way." It may be hard to discern it, difficult "in the circumstances" to know what is best. Or, again, the issue may be quite clear. But here is the peculiarity of the moral consciousness of man. The moment we do detect the Good as between two alternative courses of action, something else becomes manifest in it, something shining and formidable. It becomes not simply higher and finer, it becomes "imperative." I know that I ought to do it. The Good in this sense is not simply something wiser, preferable, more beautiful, more desirable. It has a thread of steel in it, a quality of adamant. It is the only course open to me that is "right," and every other course is "wrong." Two great systems of Ethics have been built up on these conceptions

of the Good and of moral Obligation. But they are surely both always present, though it may be in varying degrees, in every life that can be called moral at all.

I do not think that anyone will question that in substance this is an accurate account of how men universally feel and judge in all matters of moral conduct. They may differ indefinitely as to the particular things or courses of action that they think good, just as in scientific judgments they differ often indefinitely as to the theories they think to be true. But what they believe to be best they know they ought to do.

Without the sense of the Good and the Right there can be no morality. Now how does Naturalism, the theory that science is the sole pathway to Reality, explain this moral consciousness of mankind? It is, as we have seen, shut up to the conclusion that the sole ultimate realities are measurable and quantitative realities, for the universe itself is in the last resort composed of gyrating electrons and atoms according to the older Naturalism, or of Space-Time, with a *nisus* in it, whatever that *nisus* (or striving) may mean. According to this latter view the ultimate truth about human beings is that they are space-time patterns differing only in conformation, location, duration, degree of *nisus*, and so on. Now how are you to fit the Good and the Right into this scheme? The plain truth is that they cannot be fitted at all. They are of quite a different order. Science has to do solely with facts and events, not with moral values and validities. Its entire concern, therefore, is with that which is, which was and

which will be, but not with that which ought to be. Indeed by no ingenuity whatsoever can you derive that which ought to be out of that which simply is. It is on a different plane of Reality. Here is the earthquake rent which passes across the whole naturalistic construction of the world. Now if men differ from animals and things in the last resort only by possessing or being a different kind of space-time pattern, can you attach any peculiar sacredness to them? Here, let us say, is an ox and here is a man. Probe and explore the true nature of each to the uttermost. In the end the ultimate difference is simply one of conformation of space-time. If it is right to exploit the one why should it be wrong to exploit the other? In the end the difference can only be that men have so persuaded themselves. There is no real inherent difference in worth. All such judgments of good and bad, right and wrong are purely subjective, created by man and projected upon objects in themselves neutral.

This is what the naturalistic evolutionary theory of morality in the last resort comes to. How on that theory did the sense of the supreme value of human beings and the unconditional imperatives of morality grow up?

Society, it is said, was at the first a chaos of competing groups, struggling for bare existence and a place in the sun. That group had the best chance which was most compact and worked best together. Hence arose customs and laws and, in the end, morality. The standard of what was good had its roots in utility to the tribe in its desperate struggle for existence. The sense of

moral obligation was also instilled into individual men by the pressure of tribal opinion. They were made to feel that they were under obligation to their fellows to be loyal to those common standards of the Good which they had created. The sense of the Good and the Right, therefore, are every whit as much products of and weapons in the struggle for existence as tooth and nail, club and knife, trench-mortar and bomb. Man for his own ends has created all values and all validities, and space-time Nature has created him. Such in substance seems to be the naturalistic evolutionary theory of the origin of morality. Now, to ignore for a little the question of whether this can be considered an adequate theory from the point of view of history and psychology, I would point out that for a deeper reason it does not get to the heart of the matter at all. It does not really explain the Good and the Right. It explains them away. It is the endeavour to explain historically and psychologically how men came to imagine that goodness ought to be revered, that human beings are sacred, and that we ought to be sincere and brave. It explains these values and validities as being what I believe we can only call racial illusions. There is a world of difference surely between man's creating moral values and validities and his recognising them. We come here to a definite parting of the ways, a critical decision which every one must make for himself, and which, if he can think coherently, must for him determine his whole view of Nature and of history. The primary question for him is not how he has come to believe that there is a real difference between Good and Evil, between a life

which is honest and pure and brave and a life which is shifty and sensual and mean. He has to ask himself, Is it really true that I ought to be just, sincere and humane? or are all these standards racial illusions whose ultimate source is social utility in the struggle for existence, and social pressure, and whose whole end is to secure biological success in the great arena? In other words, do we create or do we recognise these standards? If we create them, then I see no alternative but to regard them as in a real sense illusions, which man for practical purposes has agreed to regard as realities. We older people sometimes find pleasure in watching children playing at beings kings and courtiers. They get infinite enjoyment out of the game, for they have wonderful imaginative power. A tattered and faded old coat becomes a mantle of imperial purple, a staff becomes a sceptre, and a wreath of twisted rushes a tiara of diamonds. Older people watch them with a smile, but to the children it is all real. As yet they have the power to create these values and to live in a more or less coherent world of their own imaginings. We know that by and by they will lose that power. Meantime we are well pleased to see them create and project standards that are purely of their own making on things which in themselves have no value at all. Something like this must always be the view which coherent and thoroughgoing Naturalism takes of the whole world of moral values and validities of Good and Evil and Right and Wrong. This is the inevitable consequence of every account of the universe which says that science is the sole pathway to Reality. We break clear out of it whenever

we definitely say that, intrinsically, honesty is better than meanness, sincerity than falsehood, pity, mercy and love than cruelty, and that at all costs, we are unconditionally bound to follow them.

Let us take these two fundamental elements of morality, then, the Good and Duty, or our moral obligation to do the best that we know, and try out in fuller detail the naturalistic explanation of them. Let us begin with the Good. According to the naturalistic view in its full and, I believe, only consistent form, the first and only fundamental thing that we can say about any human being is that he is a material organism. From this all else that is psychical and moral is derived and dependent. To this derived realm all emotional and moral values belong. They are created, as Mr Huxley says, by man but he projects them, ascribes them to the other space-time patterns round him, both things and human beings. There must be something in these other structures that awakens in him emotions of approval or condemnation, admiration or disgust, but these differences cannot in the last resort be other than spatial and temporal distinctions, something measurable, in fact, for otherwise they would fall outside the range of science and science alone can describe Reality. In this sense, then, all the great values are created by the human race, and by a kind of useful illusion projected on human beings. Now let us test this theory on the greatest figure in human history—Christ upon the Cross of Calvary. Christ on His Cross is not in Himself supremely noble. He is regarded by us as such because the human race in the struggle for existence has

developed certain moral standards which it is racially expedient for them to follow and admire, and racially expedient also for them to project upon a space-time pattern of a certain type. Could sophistication go further? The theory plainly leads to a mutilation and distortion of Reality and confutes itself by so preposterous a conclusion. Imagine the whole of humanity, past, present and to come, gathered round that Sufferer in countless myriads all united in proclaiming Him a moral outcast, yelling at and cursing Him as a moral leper and an enemy of the human race. Would that make one iota of difference to the moral greatness of the Sufferer? We know that it would not. It would tell us much about the heart of humanity but nothing whatever about Him. Yet if mankind creates all moral values, how is that possible? In such a case the judgment of the human race must be final. The naturalistic theory of morality cannot therefore face this *experimentum crucis*. The human race cannot judge Christ. He judges the human race from the judgment seat of His Cross. He is the supremely noble One in Himself, and we either acknowledge Him for what He is, or pass Him by—blind! It is impossible here without overloading our argument to go into the whole question of whether all values are objective or only some. For the purposes of that argument here and now it is enough to concentrate on moral goodness, and I submit that here we have something as objectively present as sun or moon or star, something which we do not create but recognise. We create our own recognition of it, that is all, but it is “out there” quite

independently of our own judgments, whether we recognise it or not. Reality has been well defined as "that of which we must take account," and certainly any account of the universe which does not take account of this profound difference between Good and Evil ignores Reality, and in its very nature must give a distorted view of the world. As has been said above, we have to take a stand here and to make a decision. We have taken Jesus Christ on His Cross as the crucial instance, but however unique He may be in other respects (and to this we shall come later), in these great spiritual qualities He is the perfect one among many, "the first-born among many brethren." What is true of moral greatness in His case is true of all His real followers, and of all those human personalities in so far as they embody sincerity, justice, purity and love.

We have here, then, in this actual world, as well as the bare measurable facts of which science takes cognisance, that which is of absolute worth. It is worth man's while to attain some human measure of it which will justify his existence and which it is worth God's while to create. It is a simple fact, that there have appeared, and are still appearing in the "cosmic weather" of Nature and in the flux of human history, men and women of such moral dignity, beauty and goodness that we cannot help feeling that they are excellent in themselves, and not simply because men imagine that they are so. As Professor Laird has said, we have to use old-fashioned words here and say that they are excellent from God's point of view. They inevitably suggest an Absolute Judgment, in

other words, God. Further, as they come into being and achieve their goodness in the heart of and by means of the course of Nature in human history, they inevitably lead us on to think of the world of Nature as instinct with a purpose which has these values as its supreme end. They bring meaning into what we might otherwise feel to be an aimless world. This has been well expressed by one of our modern novelists :¹

“His knowledge of Sinclair and that bunch of men of his old ship gave to an aimless and sprawling world the assurance of anonymous courage and faith waiting in the sordid muddle for a signal, ready when it came. There were men like that. You could never tell where they were. They were only the crowd. There was nothing to distinguish them. They had no names. They were nobodies. But when they were wanted, there they were ; and when they had finished their task they disappeared, leaving no sign but in the heart. Without the certainty of that artless and profitless fidelity of simple souls, the great ocean would be as silly as the welter of doom undesigned, and the shining importance of the august affairs of the flourishing cities worth no more homage than the brickbats of Babylon. These people gave to God any countenance by which He could be known.”

If they are excellent from God's point of view, they can hardly be regarded as otherwise than one of the motives and ends of His will. Thus the moment we admit into our view of the world process the appearing of moral values, which are there whether we recognise them or not, we are

¹ H. M. Tomlinson, *Gallions Reach*, pp. 170, 171.

admitting a most potent transforming leaven into any merely scientific view of the world, which must spread through the whole system of causes and effects or of natural uniformities with which science is alone concerned, until the whole be leavened. What was before a system of causes and effects now becomes a system of means and ends. The whole material part of the world must somehow have the reason of its existence, or at least part of that reason, in the creation and development of the noblest type of human personalities, which to the Christian means men and women of the type and spirit of the Crucified, in other words, the coming of the Kingdom of God.

If, then, in our reverence for justice, sincerity and humanity we have a true pathway to Reality, a glimpse into the ultimate nature of things, it seems clear that we must transform our earlier scientific view of a world of causes and effects into that of a Kingdom of Ends. We must, in a word, have some conception of cosmic purpose, for "absolute worth" is when taken alone a mere abstraction. Worth has only meaning when we think of a will, a purpose which is seeking it. If we do not do that we are thrown back into the morass of believing that all morality is relative and that we create all our values, and that is a quite untenable position. No man can live continuously in that sceptical zone. So long as he is a mere spectator of time and existence, so long as he sits in his study worshipping idols of the study, he may think himself into it, and to use Hegel's phrase may see the world "grey in grey," but the moment he rouses himself and goes out into the

living world in which decisions between Good and Evil have to be made, the moral life awakens in him again. He holds on to his resolute quest for scientific truth, and his championship of it when he has found it, because he feels that he unconditionally ought to do so; he lives his life among his fellows disinterestedly and manfully because he knows that truth and sincerity and courage are good in themselves, and no mere illusions, and he very vigorously condemns all meanness and injustice because they are in themselves wrong and despicable courses of action, and the world seems no longer "grey in grey" draped in hues of twilight, but vivid with action and passion, aspiration and victory and defeat, a world in fact worth living in because it is a world of moral reality, and not a world of racial illusion.

We have come so far, then, in our examination of the Good as affording us a pathway to Reality and in the transformation of the purely scientific view which that implies. We have to consider now that other universal element in the moral consciousness of mankind of which we have spoken, a conviction of moral obligation which always accompanies the perception of the Good. To every fully developed moral personality the Good presents itself not simply as what is desirable, not even only as what is fine and high, but as imperative. Morality has to do not only with the Hellenic "good" but with the Hebraic "ought." We do not only feel that sincerity is better than shiftiness and is in itself noble, we are persuaded that we ought not to tell lies. Nor is this imperative confined as some think to negative prohibition. Every morally

sane person knows that he ought to be just and brave and humane. We have here a simple idea which we cannot analyse into anything more elementary. We can only give illustrative synonyms for duty, such as "oughtness," "moral obligation," the "moral imperative," and so on. If we are young and dislike Victorian grandiloquence we say, "It is up to us to do something or other," or less adequately we can say of any action that is under the ban, that "it is not done," but every adequate dealing with moral experience must take account of this peculiar imperative element in the moral standards of all normal people. Now, as we have seen, the naturalistic evolutionary scheme has its own historical explanation of how this conviction of moral obligation became rooted in civilised humanity. In the desperate struggle for existence, primitive societies brought every conceivable pressure to bear upon their individual members to obey the tribal codes and follow their customs. These codes were enforced by sanctions of approval and reward, or ostracism and penalty. So arose man's sense of obligation and duty. Again we have not time or space here to inquire in detail whether or not this is good psychology and history. I would suggest that it is not, for it takes no account of the obvious roots of unconditional obligation in religion with its sense of the holy and the sacred. But taking it as it stands, we have again, just as we saw was the case in dealing with the evolutionary explanation of the Good, a historical and psychological explanation of how men came to imagine that they were under moral obligation. It gives us not the slightest help when we ask whether it

is really *true* that we ought to be sincere and just and brave. In fact it explains the imperative away by making it simply another useful racial illusion. For when on the lines of the evolutionary Naturalism I probe into the deep historic roots of my sense of duty, I find that just as goodness was of value simply as a means for my tribe getting more out of the pool of Nature than its rivals, so that sense of unconditional obligation is really my dread of the penalties which the fierce will of my social group imposes upon offenders, together with an intense desire for their approval. That the evolutionary view of morality contains truth which must be taken up into any final account of morality I do not question. But if this narrowly naturalistic form be accepted, it is necessary to say plainly that it reduces all man's sense of the sacredness of duty to mere racial expediency. It is certain that when I bow my head in presence of the ideal and say "that is what I ought to be," my mind is moving in quite a different world from that of personal or social utility. I am not in the least degree thinking of the practical gain which my nation is going to get out of such conduct, but of something more fundamental. I am really thinking of what is unconditionally demanded of me by Reality. But obviously on the naturalistic evolutionary view all this is over-belief and illusion. We have, therefore, once more, turning away for the time from all these naturalistic explanations of man's sense of duty which depreciate and denature it, to ask ourselves the direct question, "Is it 'God's truth' that I ought to be sincere, just, pure and humane, and to do the best that I know?" Is there really anyone

not sophisticated or confused by a theory who doubts it? This theory, too, is a mere idol of the study. The moment we go out into the battle of life, all such sophistications fall away, and by their moral judgments on themselves, and still more upon others, men never show any doubt on the matter. They unhesitatingly approve or condemn their own actions and the actions of all other people with whom they have to do, not only as desirable or detestable, but as right or wrong. And they do this not only in Christendom but they have done so and they do so in all ages and in all lands.

Here again we have to make a personal decision. Is it true or is it false that I ought to do the best I know? It is a plain issue but on it hangs much beside. If it is true, it gives a clear open pathway to reality. Like the other element in the moral consciousness, the perception of the supreme worth of goodness and the sacredness of personality, it tells me something momentous not only about myself but about the nature of the universe of which I form a part. Kant was the first great modern thinker to discern this clearly, and though his formulation may have been inadequate, there is permanent truth behind it. First of all, it is clear that if I ought to do or be anything, I can do or be that thing. Either I can do it now or there is power somewhere in the world available for me which will enable me to do it, and I can find that power and ought to seek it. Moral obligation, in a word, implies freedom. It is absurd to suppose that anyone can be morally condemned for that which he is fatalistically necessitated to do. And to take a step farther, the universe of which I am a part

must be so constituted as to admit of that freedom. Here again we must pass beyond the limits of the purely scientific and mathematical view of the world. If we take our stand on the reality of moral obligation we say definitely that the barely scientific view of man cannot be complete, that here we have something again that passes through the meshes of the great net. Just as we have seen individuality elude the meshes, so now does moral obligation. But though they elude science they are there in the cosmos all the same, demanding to be taken account of in the final summing-up. They make it clear that the real universe must be richer and freer than any conceivable mathematical account of it. It need not for all that be disorderly, but its final order may be of a different kind from that which we can formulate in mathematical terms.

We must, I believe, go farther still if we follow this pathway to Reality consistently through. We have seen that we cannot derive the finally imperative "ought" from a world of mere neutral facts or things, but can we reach any positive conclusion as to That which finally is from what we know we ought to be? Can we discover anything here in this fundamental conviction that we ought to be just, pure and brave, that throws real light not only on our personal freedom but on the fundamental riddle of the world? I believe that we can. Free personalities as we are, we are unquestionably parts of a whole. We are rooted in the universe, and our thoughts and actions ramify out indefinitely into that world. Now supposing it were true that the Sovereign Power of the universe were a

malignant spirit, a "President of the Immortals" who is having His sport with the human race, such as Thomas Hardy's sombre imagination conceived Him to be, who, with a view to our moral evil and woe, was inspiring us with illusory ideas of right and wrong, honour, chastity and kindness, would it be possible to maintain our faith in the value of the good and the validity of the moral imperative? Surely the whole moral life would collapse. It could not live within so ghastly a cosmogony. Nor, I believe, can it be maintained in a morally neutral cosmogony. When we read the succession of fierce attacks upon Nature which I have cited in an earlier chapter, or read Hardy's lugubrious complainings in his letters and poems over the enormities wrought by the unconscious Power which begets helpless mortals, who are able from a higher moral standpoint to judge it as on a lower moral plane than themselves, it is clear that to suppose a morally neutral Almighty is only a shade better than to suppose a malevolent sovereign. When we examine these impeachments we find that the writers, one and all, believe that they possess a moral standard which is higher than that of Nature and is more than evolutionary illusion. They are, indeed, in their own way following the same line as Pascal in that famous passage in which he says that in comparison with the vast bulk and power of Nature man is only as a reed, but, he adds, retrieving the balance, "man is a thinking reed."

The immediate question before us is a very simple one. Is it possible to hold such a view of ultimate Reality and at the same time to believe that we are unconditionally bound to follow the

highest that we know? That is to say, can we be bound to live on a morally higher plane than ultimate Reality? Surely the moment that we thus formulate the matter we observe that we have said something inherently absurd.¹

The position is not really permanently tenable at all. We must, if we are to maintain the validity of the moral imperative, believe that in the last resort the universe is not the moral chaos which is implied in the impeachments of which I have spoken.

But, it may be said, we have no real proof that the world is such a moral order, only a postulate or human demand that it shall be so. In a word, we have here simply a supreme instance of that "wishful thinking" of which the Humanist writers make so much. No, it is a great deal more than that. But, first of all, even supposing that it were so, we would not in making such a postulate do anything more than all science is continually doing, and without which science could not indeed exist. As we have seen, science postulates order and sets out to prove it. Of that fundamental postulate Naturalism can give no rational justification whatsoever. Yet, if men cease to make it, all science, as we have seen, would stop dead. Why it should be reasonable to postulate physical order, and unreasonable to postulate moral order in the universe, has yet to be shown. Yet the impeachers of Nature

¹ Bertrand Russell apparently thought that such a position was tenable when he wrote *A Free Man's Worship*, for he urges men to be true to their own higher nature in spite of the sovereign tyrant. But though he retained the essay and reprinted it, he did so with a foreword which explained that he no longer held that faith in man's ideal standard which enabled him to impeach the unjust Zeus.

of whom I have spoken accept the one without question and repudiate the other. For this I can find no reason whatever, save in the first place the unproved dogma that science alone can give a final account of Reality, and secondly, the amount of evil in the world. With the latter we shall be concerned later.

But I submit that in our conviction that the ultimate Reality of the universe is moral in its nature, is something very much more than a postulate. There is something in the demand which plain duty makes upon us that is pregnant with a deeper meaning. Why do we call it an imperative at all? Other courses of action we describe by lighter language. They are wise and prudent, desirable, "fair and fit," but this has a different quality, and demands therefore a different name. It is formidably uncompromising. Great masters of literature in all ages and lands have explored the situation which arises when all man's earthly interests draw him in one direction and another voice calls him to turn his back on all these and go out into the rising storm and the midnight. The illustration that comes first into my mind is that passage in Victor Hugo's magnificent melodrama of *Les Misérables* where Jean Valjean, the escaped galley slave, who has become a prosperous manufacturer and a benefactor of the poor, finds himself compelled to choose between giving himself up to justice and allowing an innocent man to suffer in his stead. I know no passage in modern literature where that "tempest in the brain," that conflict within the soul between not simply the lowest personal motives but between

high and unselfish motives (for the happiness of many poor and helpless people depends on his escape from justice) and Jean Valjean's own sense of right and wrong is more powerfully depicted. They who do not recognise their own personal struggles displayed here on a colossal scale must be blind indeed. At last the imperative prevails and we see Valjean hurrying through the night to fulfil its demands, overcoming, with desperate resourcefulness, a series of accidents which might have stopped him, until he arrives in the courtroom only just in time. All his personal desires, all his unselfish love for the poor who depend upon him and who will be ruined by his downfall, are as nothing at last before that supreme command. In presence of that Authority they are as dust and a shadow. It is not the authority of common law that constrains him, for he has no hesitation thereafter in escaping from justice, it is something above his fear of returning to the galleys and beyond his love even for his adopted child, a naked command from the Supreme which must be obeyed. Now none of us, I take it, are escaped convicts, but none the less we all know the difference in quality and tone between that voice and all other voices in the soul, and the real problem before us now is the question, Whose is that voice? Is it from Reality telling us the truth—God's truth—or is it racial illusion surviving long past its day, to add often to the increase of human misery? If it is not from Reality there can be no sure support for our persistent belief in unconditional right and wrong. There is no rock beneath our feet, only unfathomable morass. Whence on the naturalistic theory,

did our perception of right and wrong originate? In the instinctive will to live of a primitive society fighting for hunting-grounds and dominance and coercing the selfishness of its warriors and their squaws into a compact fighting and breeding unit. What has kept it in being and developed it through the ages but the same mortal struggle for life, with social solidarity as a necessary condition of survival? But if this explains all my sense of the good and of the right, surely all the keener and bolder minds will ask the question, Why should I submit to what after all is mere custom and tradition transmitted from past generations, which originated under totally different social conditions? Why, since society is nowadays in constant evolution, should I regard any of its claims upon me as absolute? They may have been valid a hundred years ago, but why should they be valid and imperative for me to-day? Everything becomes relative and, to use Professor Hocking's vigorous phrase, "All morality slithers down, as the foundations give way, like a house founded upon the sands."

But in that case it is not only morality that goes, it is knowledge as well. If all morality is only what it is racially expedient that I should do, then all truth is only what it is racially expedient that I should believe. You and I to-day are not really engaged in a serious inquiry into the meaning of human life, but about what it is racially expedient that we should believe in order that our nation should triumph in the struggle for existence. In other words, we get into that weary old suicidal scepticism about all knowledge of which, in my judgment, Pragmatism is only a modern variety.

Now all this preposterous sophistication shows to my mind that there is something radically wrong with the foundation of the Humanist position that science and science alone is the pathway to Reality, and that we must make the best of it. It seems to me quite clear that in a world so construed there is no room for any valid imperative of duty at all, refine and disguise the matter from ourselves as we may. The naturalistic theory of morality necessarily implies that both our scale of values in the soul and our sense of duty come solely from our mother, Nature, and as Nature, all are agreed, is unmoral, Reality must therefore be unmoral too.

What, then, lies behind the moral imperative? What gives it its quality and authority? Whose is the voice that commands? Is it the voice of the group or society to which I belong, as naturalistic ethics maintains? About this one thing must be said. It is quite clear that if society is that which imposes ultimate moral authority, then that society can itself be under no authority. It can do neither right nor wrong to other nations. It is free to do anything to other societies—morality, so to speak, only runs within the group or nation. This is the inevitable consequence of making morality simply a means to the survival of the fittest in the struggle for existence. The nation as such is outside the sphere of morality altogether, and therefore the intrusion of moral considerations into international policy must be purely mischievous. To most men and women of intelligence and goodwill such conclusions are obviously preposterous. How destructive they must needs be of all trust

between the peoples of the earth or of all hope of international peace, save by one country acquiring so great a military preponderance as to make its sway world-wide and age-lasting, is plain.

But if it is not the nation in which we live which imposes the obligation, however vast and ancient that society may be, can it be humanity? Clearly we get quite away here beyond the merely naturalistic evolutionary theory into something which transcends the struggle for existence between competing groups. But the trouble is that we simply get into the air! Humanity as a whole does not as yet exist. Much, if not most of it, is yet in the future. "Humanity," like all common terms, is a mental abstraction. No such being exists, there is only a vast aggregate of individual men and women. Each unit of that whole knows himself or herself under obligation to something or Some One intensely real, some great source or power, which is certainly not a mental abstraction. But if that be true of the individual, must it not be true of the aggregate of individuals? There is more truth in the conception of humanity being the supreme end of morality than the state or community, but it cannot be the source of this obligation, for it is all under obligation. Can the source, then, be found in Nature out of which historically humanity has come? But surely, as we have seen, unconscious and neutral Nature is on a lower moral plane than man, who is free, and whose ideals carry him above and beyond mere Nature, so that he can impeach Nature and conceive the audacious maxim "Let justice be done though the heavens should fall!" But if neither the

nation nor humanity nor Nature can be the voice that utters the imperative, Whose can it be ?

If it is finally true that I ought to be just and sincere and humane, to be and to do the best that I know, it is clear that that voice comes from Ultimate Reality. Reality must be disclosing its nature in revealing to me that obligation. Unconditional obligation can only be imposed by Absolute Reality.

If in the last resort we ask, Why ought we to do right ? we can only say, Because Reality demands it of us. If we are asked, Why must we obey this voice of Reality ? we can only say, Because we ought to do so. Truth and duty are not identical, but they are inseparable. You cannot explore either without coming face to face and trafficking with the other. Explore what is involved in the moral imperatives and surely one must feel that Reality is speaking here. If illusion is speaking, then all validity must go—the imperative is found out. Explore what Reality is, and as you discover it you feel that you must take account of it. Its very nature is that it demands to be taken account of and makes not only intellectual but practical claim upon us, speaking in the former case as truth and in the latter as duty.¹

We find, then, that whether we take the line of the Good, or of the moral Imperative, the result is the same. Following the former, we reach the idea of a supreme Purpose creatively at work in the universe, bringing into being and training a family of spiritual beings : following the latter, we find also a conscious purposive Reality, warning us

¹ See Appendix I.

decisively off certain ways of living, and inspiring us to follow others in harmony with His own. Both alike and together reveal the universe as a purposive system, creative of spiritual beings akin in nature to their Creator and Father. If we are, indeed, to conserve our full moral consciousness and the validity of its judgments, there is no real alternative. We must transform that whole view of the world on which, as we have seen, Humanism proceeds.

Now is such a transformation possible without destroying the scientific view? Humanism believes that it is not, and holding to the scientific view as the only one that is possible for educated modern men, is prepared to reduce and denature the worlds of morality, art and religion. We have seen good reason to hold that this is simply due to an exaggeration of the scope of science, which in its very nature can only give us a partial account of the world. But, none the less, the scientific account is true so far as it goes, and what we have to consider now is whether the interpretation of the world as one great purposive system which follows on, as we have seen, inevitably from our admitting the absolute value of spiritual beings and the validity of the moral imperative, is capable of taking up the whole scientific view into itself. That it can do so without difficulty I shall now try to show. I can do this best by way of illustration. Imagine some highly intelligent being, some Cro-Magnon primitive, let us say, transported down the ages into our own time into a civilisation of which he knows nothing, and set down in the middle of a modern factory. When he has recovered from

the first shock of dismay and bewilderment we can imagine him asking first the child's question, "What makes it go?" He begins with one of the spinning-jennies, and after much puzzling traces the motive power to the belting, and further back still to the local power-house. Thence again he pursues it away up to the generating station in the Highlands, and travels through the mountains by tunnel and open channel away up to the lonely mountain tarn, which a great dam has turned into a reservoir. He can go no farther. Nature, he sees, is doing the rest, filling the springs among the heather, and draining them down in tumbling cataracts into the lake. But the end of his quest through effects to causes releases his mind for a new and even more exciting inquiry—What, he asks himself, is it all for? Why have men been undertaking all this enormous labour? Surely for something more than to set these strange machines moving. So he begins again. First, why have they built the great dam and driven these amazing burrows through miles of granite? Clearly to get the waterfall. And why that long line of pylons? To transmit the power to the local station. And why the local power-houses? To drive the belting. And why the belting? To drive the jennies from which he started. But why the jennies? All the way he has, it will be seen, been transforming causes and effects into means and ends without the slightest difficulty. But the new line of inquiry propels him on. Spinning-jennies and yarn are obviously an insufficient motive. So he goes on to the looms and then to the finished web, and thence to the makers and vendors of human

clothing and draperies and curtains and carpets, and thence on to the human beings who purchase and use the textiles, and to all the health, comfort and grace and general enrichment and refinement of life made possible to men, of which he in his cave had never dreamed. Here we have the narrow investigation from effects to causes immensely enriched by its inclusion in the larger and more interesting inquiry into the system of means and ends.

But be it noted that it was essential for the purpose of discovery that the first search for causes should be isolated and abstracted from the other into means and ends. It would only have cumbered him in his earlier scrutiny of jennies and on his way up to the tarn if he had allowed his mind to mix up, along with his investigations into the mechanism, such considerations as the comfort and decency and beauty of clothing, and its place in human life. All that, while true and important, was irrelevant to the particular inquiry, and so being by supposition a highly intelligent primitive, he made abstraction from it all of the particular sphere of inquiry which he had in hand. But being a Cro-Magnon, and not a Neanderthal man, he only made temporary abstraction from it, and when he had got his science far enough, he went on to philosophy and religion and began asking and answering the more fundamental question: Why? But when that later question was answered, however imperfectly, I do not think that he would find any real difficulty in fusing all the results of his inquiries into one homogeneous whole.

Even so, to pass from our parable, the human

intelligence can pass from the positive and scientific to the teleological view without contradiction, transforming its earlier world of causes and effects, or of what seem causes and effects, into a realm of means and ends.

It would seem, then, that the use of the moral experience of man as a true pathway to Reality does not, in principle, lead to any real conflict with the use of the scientific pathway. I am not at this stage of the argument dealing with minor tensions between the two methods of interpreting the world, but simply with the broad issue between those who look upon the world as a vast system of Space-Time and Energy, operating according to uniform law, and those who look upon it teleologically as a creative process realising spiritual ends of absolute and enduring value, a system, therefore, full of purpose and meaning.

V

NATURAL THEOLOGY

WE have seen that the naturalistic account of the universe which is, I think, to-day practically identical with that view which asserts that science alone provides a true interpretation of the universe, has two fatal weaknesses. Critical analysis of the scientific method has shown that while admirably competent for certain special purposes, it is inherently incompetent to deal with the whole of human experience and, further, that when we attempt to use it for these broader purposes it leads us to a plainly distorted account of what in our saner moments we know to be true and valid. I have examined some of these plain distortions. It can give only a caricature of human history, and also of the moral life of man, and it also leads to the denaturing of truth itself into a mere utility. Consideration of the moral consciousness has led us to a more comprehensive view of the world which seems to be capable of containing all that is true in the scientific account, while yet at the same time it recognises to the full the distinction between good and evil, truth and falsehood.

In the last resort the great issue as to whether the universe in which we are living is fundamentally sub-moral, sub-human and sub-rational, because impersonal and unconscious, seems to me to turn,

above all, on the question of whether I ought to do the highest that I know. Here, as I have said, we have to make a definite judgment and a definite decision. I have put that, therefore, in the foreground, and have drawn the first consequences from it, that the ground of the universe is rational and moral, and that it is realising a moral purpose. But that there is much in the universe besides this moral judgment which confirms this view of the world source and ground, I do not doubt. These lectures make no claim to be a complete discussion of Theism, and must necessarily, therefore, leave much on one side. But there are certain broad characters in the physical universe that are so intimately related to the track of thought which we are following that I propose to speak briefly of them in this lecture. These are the mathematical structure of the physical universe and what I can only call its extravagant beauty. What explanation can we give of these, and how far do they confirm the general conclusion reached in the last lecture? Here we enter the domain of Natural Theology.

Long before the dawn of modern science the Greek geometers and the Arabian algebraists had wrought their systems of spatial configurations and symbols, as it were, out of their heads. They had no doubt started from a primitive observation of what was in Nature. But they had greatly abstracted from Nature in forming their concepts. Nature is by no means obviously mathematical. She is full of the flowing, the irregular and the broken. How rarely do we see anything that looks strictly geometrical in a landscape! Thus there is the circular curve of the horizon line, but it is

almost always irregular and broken. When do we see a perfect triangle, or square, or really straight line that is not of human construction? The nearest thing one sees in Nature, perhaps, to a geometrical diagram is the system of widening circles caused by the splash of a trout in still water. But even water is not usually still! Superficially Nature does not appear to be geometrical. But these early geometers got to work upon crude Nature and abstracted away all her individualities, and analysed her bewildering complexities, and got their symbols, the line, the circle, the square, the rhomboid, and so on. Then they analysed the properties and relations of these abstractions, and gradually wrought out the world of ancient geometry.

Typical of the whole process was the development of the geometry of conic sections. Following, no doubt, observations from Nature of approximately conic figures, perhaps the shape of bare volcanic mountains, or of some homelier objects, "fillers" of bottles, or headgear or children's toys, or perhaps by simply imagining a circular pyramid, the Alexandrian geometers formed the highly generalised and abstract idea of the cone. Then it was discovered that by transecting it at various angles by the similarly observed and generalised figure of a plane, the outlines of the surface revealed various new curves. If the cone was cut straight across they got the familiar figure of a circle. If it was cut at another angle they got an ellipse, if at others a parabola or a hyperbola. Then they got to work upon these curves and discovered that these had common properties. They

supposed imaginary lines and imaginary points, directrices and foci, which stood in certain relations to these curves, and which could be expressed in algebraical formulæ, and so for the sheer intellectual pleasure in the process, they developed the whole geometry of conic sections. Then in effect the whole intellectual creation was pigeon-holed for a millenium and a half. The world went on its way, Jesus Christ came, and died and rose again, the Church came into being, the wild races of the north broke through the Roman walls along the Rhine and across the moors of Northumberland, and poured through the Alpine passes; the Dark and Middle Ages followed; the Crusaders brought the algebra of the Arab mathematicians into the field of Western thought, and Copernicus developed his astronomical theories, and Galileo his telescopes; new planets swam into the ken of the watchers in observatories, new comets flared in the heavens and a startling discovery was made. "The planets moved in ellipses, the satellites of Jupiter in circles, and the comets in elliptical, parabolic and hyperbolic orbits."¹ It became necessary to take the ancient parchments out of their pigeon-holes once more. The play of the intellect of these long-vanished geometers of Alexandria had unawares penetrated the secret of the heavens. Can we imagine a more impressive proof that there is some deep likeness or kinship between human intelligence and that which underlies the world?

Modern physics and mathematics have furnished us with another striking example of the same principle in the way in which the theories of Riemann,

¹ Flint's *Theism*, pp. 134-35.

with the new geometry which he developed, so to speak out of his own head by simple reasoning, led on to the discoveries of Einstein, with their final verification by astronomical observation.

But, as we have seen, the later developments in physics have been passing more and more over into mathematics until astronomers like Sir James Jeans are found asking themselves and the public whether there is anything material left in the universe at all; whether when physics has pressed the last questions home there is anything left but mathematics. "The universe," they say, "is becoming much liker a thought than a thing"; and this would seem irresistibly to suggest an intimate relationship between the human intelligence and the entire structure of Nature.

It will certainly not do to explain this as Naturalism must necessarily seek to do, by saying that it is due to the fact that Nature has produced the mathematical faculty in man just as she has produced his muscular constitution by the struggle for existence, and survival of the fittest. We might as well say that the struggle for existence produced the genius of Shakespeare or Beethoven. We might as well say, to use Dr Rashdall's apt illustration, that "the cane of the schoolmaster produces the intelligence of the pupil." The struggle for existence may have some part to play in overcoming the indolence or self-indulgence which inhibits the intelligence from awakening, and putting forth its powers. But of what immediate use were the Alexandrian astronomers as a whole to their city and people in the struggle for existence, compared with soldiers and tradesmen and artisans?

A few of them might be engineers also, like Archimedes in Syracuse, and devise war engines as well as work out apparently futile theories like the geometry of conic sections. But it is difficult to see how a type of intelligence whose labours had to wait for fifteen hundred years before they could be utilised, could be the fittest to survive in an urgent daily struggle for existence. Some better theory must plainly be devised to explain the deep affinity between the human mind and the world of Nature.

I am desirous not to press the point in my own words unduly, and shall, in spite of repetition, let two others, neither of them prejudiced witnesses, re-state it for me.

No one is more competent to speak on the history of science than Professor Burt, the author of *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science*. Let us hear what he has to say on the relations of the Alexandrian theories, not only to the paths of the planets, and the comets, but to the whole later course of science. In a smaller volume¹ written about the same time as the impressive book to which I have referred he says: "We are all aware that mathematics is, so to speak, the logic of exact science. I mean by this, that it prescribes the exact quantitative structure in terms of which all laws of exact science must be worked, and whose relations their deductions constantly use. Now one of the most striking themes in the history of science is the way in which abstract thinking in the form of those mathematics has faithfully fulfilled its functions of outstripping the emergence of

¹ *Religion in an Age of Science*, pp. 116-17.

other scientific problems, as also the way in which problems depend upon the victory of mathematics if they are to be exactly stated and clearly solved. One of the most striking examples of this is the theory of conic sections which was developed by the Greek metaphysicians. These ancient geometers did not dream of any application of their results to problems in other sciences, with them it was a matter of pure mathematical theory, proved because of their spontaneous delight in the discovery of a geometrical order. For a millenium and a half this theory of conic sections remained sterile, simply maintaining its place as a branch of geometry, and furnishing the minds of mathematicians with a group of curves, with which to play in any geometrical speculation to which they seemed relevant. Then when Descartes created his analytic geometry as a new tool for the application of mathematical theory to the astronomical problems exercising thinkers of his day, a totally unexpected application of the theories of conic sections became possible. For not only could the essential nature of the various curves be expressed in a simple algebraical formula, namely the general equation of the second degree, but the whole theory of the motion of bodies under the forces of attraction and inertia proved to depend upon the mathematical principle exhibited in the conic section and symbolised by the equation. Bereft of the groundwork of pure mathematical theory spun forth without any idea of further application, the great scientists of the seventeenth century would have lacked a store of exact ideas, pointing to consequences of experimental verification to

which they could fruitfully resort in their endeavour to formulate the laws of motion."

The principle that the mind can discover the foundations of the entire physical universe, and that these foundations are mathematical, is strikingly expressed in a recent lecture by Einstein on the method of Theoretical Physics: "What then was the place of reason in modern science? Reason enabled us to form concepts and laws for a theoretical system, and the consequences of these laws and concepts ought to correspond with the results of our experience. The basic concepts of a system were entirely fictitious and created in the mind of the theorist. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that had not been understood. Newton was the first to offer a comprehensive theory of physics, but Newton believed that his concepts could be revised from an abstraction of the data given by experience. From the way in which Newton expressed his theories, however, it was clear that he was by no means comfortable about the concept of absolute space, because nothing in the experience seemed fully to correspond with it. Physicists in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries did not recognise these basic concepts as a free invention of the human mind, and believed that they could be re-derived by a logical process from the facts of experience. Was it possible for the physicist to create a correct theory that would be a transcript of reality, or did such a theory not exist at all except in the imagination? He (Einstein) firmly believed that it was possible for the theorist to create such a perfect system. Our experience justified us in thinking that in Nature

could be seen the ideal of mathematical simplicity. It was within the power of the theorist to discover the laws and concepts which would give us the key to the understanding of the phenomena of Nature. Experience could not provide the key, although it could guide one in the theories of the mathematical processes to be used.”¹

The meaning of this is clear. Mathematics is a creation of the human mind or imagination. It is not a mere copy or imitation of what is observed in Nature, a theory held by some to-day. This is brought out by the word “fictitious,” and by the clear statement that experience cannot provide the key, although it can start and “guide” the creative imagination. Mathematics, we find, enters so deeply into the constitution of Nature that the best-known living representative of physical science believes that the ultimate constitution of Nature is mathematical without residuum. He cannot yet prove it, but says that he “believes” it, and that it “ought” to be so, which is a plain judgment of value.

It seems quite clear to-day then, first, that mathematics enters deeply into the constitution of the physical universe, and secondly, that mathematical theory is certainly something a great deal more than a mere imitation or reflex of observed natural processes. It is, as Einstein says above, the product of “imagination,” not of observation and memory, “creative” of thought, and shooting far ahead of what has been merely observed. Mathematics is clearly a kind of thought. But there cannot be thought without a thinker. Thought is a mere abstraction derived from the realities, which are

¹ Herbert Spencer Lecture, *Times* Report, 11th June 1933.

thinking minds. The inference is inevitable that if there is thought in the structure of the vast universe, there must be a Thinker behind it. For since it is a universe, one vast whole, the supposition that there are many intelligences behind it, while logically possible, is plainly redundant and unreasonable. The natural conclusion, therefore, as Jeans suggests, is that behind and over all there is an intelligent Mind. Now while this only carries us part of the way to belief in God, it is surely a conclusion of far-reaching moment. Of itself it disposes of that Naturalism which holds that the universe is in its final reality mere matter or energy, or "Space-Time with a *nisus* (or tension) in it." It gives us a Mind behind all things. Be it remembered that mind is also an abstraction. The only minds that we or anybody know are personal minds, minds in which in every act of thought there is will and emotion to drive it on. An impersonal intelligence is well-nigh as violent an abstraction as is thought.¹

But leaving that aside, and contenting ourselves for the moment with the result which the nature of the universe seems to demand from us, that there is Intelligence behind it, let it be noted first of all how entirely it corresponds with the results reached in last lecture, that there is a moral Source of all things, creating moral values and claiming a personal moral authority to which we owe unconditional obedience.

There is a further result of the conclusion that mathematical principles underlie the structure of the physical universe. We are in these lectures dealing primarily with the riddle of the world.

¹ See article by Archbishop D'Arcy, *Philosophy*, July 1932.

The question as to whether we can legitimately use any element in human personality to throw light on that vast and formidable environment out of which we have arisen, and into which we shall one day apparently be merged again, is of capital importance. Is not the real question, whether Nature is a mere surd quantity which cannot be rationalised at all, which is simply *there*, and which it is our wisdom to make the best of, or whether it is an intelligible purposive system, moving on to as yet unrealised moral ends? On the former view all religions and all idealistic philosophies are simply pathetic anthropomorphisms, mere "wishful thinking," creations of man's futile desires, and all the gods and all the Ideas of Plato, and the "Entelechy" or immanent purpose of Aristotle, and the Categorical Imperative of Kant, and the Absolute Reason of Hegel, are only Brocken phantoms of man himself, thrown on the mist of the unknown and unknowable.

But surely if there is Mathematical Reason in the universe which is discoverable by our reason, if it is objectively "out there" beyond all possible denial, "out there" whether we recognise it or not, "out there" whether men and women had ever lived and died or not, in a word, in the fullest sense objectively existent, that is of decisive moment. To admit it is to break clear of mere scepticism in any of its forms, and to find in the universe outside of us something deeply akin to man. In that case it becomes lawful to use personality as a key to the universe.

Moreover, since the development of the mathematical reason comes late in the history of human

evolution, and still later in the story of organic evolution, it is reasonable to conclude that the more man develops his true nature, the more deeply will he be able to understand Nature. The more he becomes himself, the more deeply will he understand her. Now the æsthetic sense is certainly part of the essential nature of man, as certainly as the scientific and mathematical reason, though its full awakening like theirs comes late in his development.¹ If we become more at home in the universe as we discern the order which underlies its apparent confusion, so when we discern loveliness in it too we become aware of something which, as it were, greets us with a welcome, and calls out an answering welcome and love.² Our perception of beauty in Nature cannot be harmonised with the naturalistic conception of the universe as consisting of mere irrational substance. It is impossible for mere Naturalism to give any intelligible account of the extravagant beauty of the universe.

“In an inquiry into the significance of ‘Animate Nature,’”³ said Sir J. Arthur Thomson, “there is no getting past the fact of beauty. It is a reasonable and verified belief that we get at something in this way, which can be reached by no other, certainly not by scientific analogies or by logic. There are curiously few general affirmations that we can make about Nature; one is that Nature is in great part intelligible or rationalistic, and another is that Nature is in greater part, beautiful.” Thomson’s attractive book deals mainly with “Animate

¹ Though there are exceptions to this even in prehistoric times, it is, I think, broadly true.

² Temple, *Nature, Man and God*, p. 253.

³ Gifford Lectures: *The System of Animate Nature*, p. 258.

Nature" and in particular with the loveliness of living things. He admits varying degrees of beauty. He goes on to say that the advance of science, though it was none of the direct business of science to do it, has been greatly to extend our survey of beauty in animate Nature. If the popular impression be that beauty is the exception, the scientific impression is that beauty is the rule. For a long time, perhaps till the middle of the nineteenth century, beauty was very generally spoken of as a quality of the exotic—the orchid and the bird of Paradise—now we discern it most at our doors and Kipling's lesson has been learned, for "we find naught common on the earth." He goes on to make a further claim: "What seems to us to be a fact, and a very interesting fact, is that all natural living, fully-formed healthy living creatures, which we can contemplate without prejudice, are in their appropriate surroundings, artistic harmonies, having that quality which we call beauty. To many of us . . . of the eye-minded type, the blotting out of the annual pageant say of flowers and birds, would be the extinguishing of one of the lights of life."

Of the infinite wealth of beauty in the world of living things, the symmetries of form, the grace of movement, the brilliance of colour, in bird and beast, in the swift creatures of the waters and in flowers who can tell the tale? The very names of these lovely living things are like music to us as we name them. The fern, the violet and the rose, the hawthorn and the plain green grass, the swallow in its glancing flight, the red deer in its race through the heather, the kine motionless in the field, these are all beautiful things representative of countless

others. I have taken these illustrations from the temperate zones, but every zone could give its own creations of beauty and grace. They are, however it may be said, selected examples, and ugly and grotesque creatures could be cited also as examples of what misshapen abominations Nature is capable of bringing into being. Alligators and vultures are as truly products of her laboratory as are graceful forms of life. It is true that though, like the writer above quoted, we may find room for the category of "difficult beauty," and admit that even in their own setting and biological environment they have a beauty of their own, we may unreservedly grant that not everything in Nature appeals to the normal sense of beauty in man.

We who hold the Christian interpretation of the riddle of the world have to allow for the possibility that something of the freedom and contingency which exists as we believe in man, may reach down into Nature. The new quantum theories of matter seem, as we have seen, to indicate the possibility of individuality and contingency reaching down into the fundamental physical world. There is even more likelihood of its existence in the sphere of living things, and in that case there may be aberrations from the Divine Order even in the sub-human living things. But what can, I think, be unhesitatingly maintained is the overwhelming preponderance in living Nature of beauty and grace over what is hideous. Ugliness and tameness are all too frequent in human productions, but when we speak of an artist as having "returned to Nature," we always instinctively think of him as having taken a fresh start towards ideal beauty.

Now what are we to make of this element which is so preponderantly intertwined with life everywhere? Can we account for it solely in terms of the Darwinian ultimates, the struggle for existence and survival of the fittest? Taken in its simple naturalistic form I do not see that that is possible. If beauty and grace were simple utilities it would be another matter. But can we say that the beauty of living things is such a utility or that it helps them to survive? A stag's speed helps it to survive, but do its grace and beauty? Nor is it enough to say that its beauty is a secondary consequence of its health, and health is a utility. For as we have seen there are healthy creatures whose beauty, if it exists at all, is of the "difficult" kind!

Darwin has endeavoured to account for the beauty of animate creatures as a sexual character of species, developed in order to attract them to each other. In this way it becomes a utility, a secondary consequence of that differentiation of the sexes which is essential for the survival and development of the species. That it has this practical function need not be questioned, but that by no means explains the presence of beauty everywhere in the animate world. Is not the deeper question: Why should living creatures have been so made that sexual attraction should have produced such profusion and elaboration of lovely things? It is well known what searchings of heart were given to Darwin's mind by the peacock's tail! But more important by far is the fact that the theory does not even begin to account for the loveliness of inanimate Nature, and surely any satisfactory account must include them both. How are we to explain the

marvellous beauty of the astronomical, the physical and the moral worlds, "the starry heavens above and the moral law within." There can be no question of sexual love in the wonder and awe which we feel in looking out upon the great constellations on a winter night, or the beauty of mountain and river and lake, or in the emotion which rises within us when thinking of

The moving waters at their priest-like task
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
Or gazing at the new soft-fallen mask
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors,

or any of the myriad things of beauty in the inanimate world of Nature. Nor can we possibly find any sexual origin of the intellectual beauty which we find in mathematical forms or demonstrations, or above all, of the moral beauty manifested in pure and great characters. There is surely something in common in all forms of beauty, and to reduce them all to a useful biological character would be a truly desperate distortion of Reality. Yet it is difficult to see how, on a consistent naturalistic theory of the universe, one can do otherwise. For on this view the ultimate realities, however we may arrange and describe them, are space, time and energy, and all the values and qualities are man's subjective emotions projected upon these and ascribed by an illusion to these measurable physical entities. They are, as Mr Huxley says, one and all "created" by man. This can only mean that man creates them within his own mind. They can only be subjective states of his own consciousness, developed in the struggle for existence for biological

reasons, that is to say, survival purposes. The objects on which they are projected in the last resort can only be space-time patterns, which, owing to difference in their conformation, produce these subjective states. Let him believe it who can!

It is clear that in this matter of the beauty of the physical universe we are face to face with the same kind of issue as was dealt with in a former lecture as to the real nature of the Good and the Right. It is, I believe, impossible to explain what I have called the extravagant beauty of Nature in terms of naturalistic evolution, just as it is impossible under the same philosophy to explain goodness and duty. The beauty of Nature is "extravagant" because there is no apparent need for it and because it is so abundant. Much of it is entirely gratuitous, if utility is all. Yet who will say of it, as many say of the apparent lavishness of the evolutionary process, that it is a wasteful incident of the struggle? What pessimist will impeach Nature for her glorious raiment and the majesty of her movement? "Beauty is its own excuse for being."

Nor can we, in presence of this strange irrelevance in our apparently utilitarian universe, find relief in the modern conception of "emergent evolution." It is impossible within the limits of this lecture fully to discuss this singular hybrid view of the universe, as it has been called, which is at present so popular in certain schools of thought. It is an endeavour to combine a mechanical view of the universe of Nature with elements borrowed from a purposive view. Natural process is supposed to be rigorously continuous, yet, strange to say, on the theory of emergent evolution, in an unbroken system of

causes and effects new elements appear in the course of evolution which could never have been predicted as the result of their antecedents, and which have full power to change the course of events which follow their appearing. How this can be reconciled with "continuity" it passes my understanding to say. In spite of the many notable philosophers and men of science of our day who are working with this conception, it seems to me in its naturalistic form too plainly self-contradictory to endure. It is, as has been truly said by Dean Matthews¹ and others, a mere descriptive account of what Nature appears to be like to purely scientific thought, combined with a description also of the undeniable fact of the emergence of novelty in the evolutionary process. But there is no *explanation* of how anything actually new can possibly come into existence without a cause for it. Dr Lloyd Morgan, the main initiator of the theory of emergent evolution, himself believed in a God behind the process. But many who hold the theory discard this faith, and are left with what seems to me the fatal result of believing in the possibility of something new emerging "out of the everywhere into here" without a Creator. It is much that they recognise that in life we have the emergence of new realities that cannot be explained in terms of the inorganic, and above all that mind cannot be explained in terms of life. But nothing whatever is explained by saying that they emerge, without saying what causes their emergence. The theory is obviously transitional and cannot endure.

¹ *The Mind : a Symposium*, Chapter on "Philosophy," p. 171.

Certainly beauty can hardly be explained as a merely emergent character, for it is diffused throughout the entire universe, physical, biological and human. It cannot "emerge" as a novelty like life and mind, for it was there all the time waiting to be recognised, as the mathematical structure of the world was waiting to be discovered.

This character of beauty must always be an alien and utterly perplexing element on any naturalistic view of the world. Can we account for it on that spiritual interpretation which has been gradually rising before us as we have been widening our view? We have seen that the mind of man has found in the very structure of the universe something deeply akin to itself. Is it at all surprising that in view of this it should find another character profoundly akin to the deep desire of its own imagination for ideal beauty? Surely the spectacle of dawn over the great waters, of noonday, or of the soft falling dusk, of the great constellations, of the pageant of the seasons, speaks to something in us kindred to itself, just as hideousness, disproportion and discord shock us as something alien. We feel that we find our true selves when we stand in wonder and admiration before all glorious and lovely spectacles in Nature. This becomes obvious when we consider the nature of art. There is that in man which responds to the call of outward beauty, and seeks to emulate it and even surpass it by creating beauty. Art is the human response to the outer summons of the beauty of the world, deep calling to deep. We have here another form of the same kinship between the environment and the human mind, which we find in the structure of the

whole. How close is the relationship comes out in the mathematical element in musical harmony, in the proportion of light and shade in painting, in symmetry in sculpture and rhythm in verse, as in the artistic element admittedly present in mathematical constructions.

We are assuredly warranted, then, in finding in beauty, as in the mathematical view of the world, an analogy between the human mind and the creative Mind which we discern in nature. Let us use this analogy as a clue to the meaning of the beauty of the earth.

The vision of the poet demands expression in a form worthy of his theme. Can we imagine Dante in Ravenna, haunted by the beauty and terror of human life seen "under the form of Eternity," choosing as his way of expressing that vision the prose in which he wrote the *De Monarchia*, or still less the colloquialisms which he and the other Florentines of his time no doubt used in the ordinary affairs of daily life in the market or the camp. The Vision of Hell, Purgatory and Paradise took other forms. It took the new popular speech, it is true, but selected from it its finest colours and sounds. Its thought clothed itself in glorious raiment "dipped in hues of earthquake and eclipse," it moved in sonorous rhythm and cadence, like the thunder of the sea. It expressed great thought in a great way. Does not this human analogy throw light on the extravagant beauty of Nature ?

God, in His working,
Is Eldest of Poets,
Unto His music
Moveth the Whole,

This faith alone gives an adequate meaning to beauty and the place which in its higher moments humanity has given to art. Something great and splendid is being achieved in Nature and in history. Nothing less than this is involved in the beauty of the earth and of the heavens. It ought to be a reassurance that something worth while is going on! The poet and the musician and the painter are they to whom it has been given to discern the beauty and the harmony of the process, as the mathematician discerns the order, and every fragment of that beauty or chord of that harmony is part of the treasure of humanity, for it is part of the revelation of God.

If this be a true account of the manifest beauty of the world, certain conclusions would seem to follow. There must be some closer relation between that philosophy of revelation which we call theology and the realm of beauty than theologians have always realised. The creeds should be such as men can sing. The churches should be places of beauty and dignity, however plain, for the entire life of the soul in communion with God is communion with the First and only Fair. On the other hand, is there no deep relation between the sterility of art in certain periods and their want of faith? When faith in God wanes the world contracts, belief in the meaning and worth of human life contracts too, and art becomes absorbed in the elaboration of trifles and externals and grotesques instead of elemental realities. This is not to say that great artists are necessarily men of faith. It is notorious that many of them are not. The case is not so simple as that. The real question

is as to whether they would not be greater artists if they were. Yet I think it is broadly true that the ages of faith, or their immediate successors before the momentum of ancestral faith has died away, and before that energy of faith in life which real faith in God brings with it has waned, have been the creative ages in the imaginative arts. Only when men believe in their hearts that something worth while is going on, have they the courage and energy for creation and for revealing the glory of Nature and human life. And we have really no assurance that anything transcendently worth while is afoot in the world, apart from faith in God.

We have now reached a point in our criticism of the fundamental position of Humanism that science alone can give us a true account of the world and of human life, where it seems desirable to sum up the alternative positive view of the universe, which has been emerging from that criticism. Instead of a merely physical system of causes and effects, such as Naturalism supposes the world to be, we have a spiritual and purposive order, a system creative of moral personalities, such as inevitably implies a sovereign, all wise and moral Power, creative of human spirits capable in their human measure of communion with Himself.

That this larger conception of the universe can contain the narrower scientific view, taking it up into itself, and transforming its system of causes and effects into a realm of means and ends I

have already tried to show. But it can do much more.

(1) The spiritual interpretation alone can do full justice, first of all, to that element of individuality which is found in every part of animate Nature. In these lectures I shall make no attempt to give any philosophy of Nature, except as it bears on our real subject, the mystery of man's lot in a physical universe. Nature has her own mysteries and presents her own hard problems, but these are outside our immediate purpose, save as they bear on the human problem. We are concerned not with a Theodicy of God's ways with plants and animals, but a Theodicy of His ways with man.

Now, on the larger spiritual view of the world we have the fullest justice done to the fact of human individuality. Its origin, development and conservation are indeed regarded as part of the end of the cosmic purpose. But the element common to all individualities is also recognised to the full. This, as we have seen, is the sphere of science, which thus is included in the larger view, and is, indeed, essential to its completeness. The whole spiritual conception of the world turns on its being a purposive system, in which the making and training of personalities is a chief end. (2) But human personalities cannot live a moral and spiritual life as isolated units, they can only realise their personalities as elements in a society. Take any one of the great fundamental virtues, faith, hope and love, and it will be found to imply human relationships. Human beings in isolation cannot be full personalities. Yet they are more

than mere constituent parts of the society to which they belong, more than mere tools of the society. If individuals are to be full human beings, they must be free to choose between good and evil, truth and falsehood. Now if we will think out what these things mean, we shall see that to be a true home and school for such free human spirits Nature must be such that knowledge and science are possible. That is to say, it must be a system of order and law. Ritschl has said somewhere, and the remark is notable because it seems to run counter to his strong insistence on the deep distinction between ordinary knowledge and religious knowledge or faith, that if we knew all things we would no doubt be able to deduce the Law of Gravitation from the Love of God. It is fortunate indeed that such deduction was never forthcoming! At the time when the saying was uttered the Law of Gravitation seemed to, perhaps, most men of science much more certain than the Love of God. To-day most would be inclined to think that such a deduction was a clear proof of the untruth of the faith. This is a warning as to the dangers of a premature reconciliation of science and religion! But whatever we may say of the particular illustration, the principle is true of natural law in general. In order that man may be a free and full personality he must live in a society, and a society can only live and grow on the earth when that earth system is so ordered that men can form general concepts about it and reach general laws, whereby they can share their knowledge and forecast Nature's ways of workings. Here indeed is a paradox, which yet is obviously true, that necessity

is the mother of freedom and that freedom can only be reached through acceptance of law.

The spiritual view of the universe therefore requires such a form of thought as science as part of its larger whole. The "reign of law" in Nature is entirely in harmony with the love of God for mankind, and in his devotion to the discovery of law the man of science is fulfilling not only a human service, but a divine vocation. Is there not something of fundamental faith in God in that strange prejudice in favour of order in Nature, on which as we have seen all progress in science to-day, as always, depends? From this point of view we see that it is far more than a mere postulate, a "supposition" such as Naturalism is compelled to suppose it to be. It is a kind of intuitive faith that whatever she may seem to be, Nature is really friendly to man and therefore orderly in all her ways. "Faith," it has been truly said, "is always a going against appearances," and the labour of all the laboratories and observatories is certainly always a going against the appearance of disorder in Nature, and is sustained by a kind of instinctive optimism, that Nature must be better to man than she appears to be. We get here, therefore, in the spiritual interpretation of Nature a reasonable foundation for the whole enterprise of science, which must otherwise be ascribed to a mere blind supposition impelled by the physical will to live; in other words, a stubborn irrational prejudice of humanity, sheer "wishful thinking" of the plainest kind. Had this conviction as to the order of the universe been really only such a demand, is it likely that Nature would have

verified it in the way she has done ? Does not the very existence of science show that there is a deep kinship between the vast system of Nature and the eager exploring human mind, such as the larger spiritual view of Nature maintains on other grounds to be the manifest truth ?

(3) As we have also seen, the larger spiritual interpretation alone accounts for the moral life, whereas the narrower view of Naturalism distorts and denatures its values and validities as well, by reducing them all to subjective states of consciousness generated by the struggle for existence and maintained because of their utility to the group. This, as we have seen, makes all morality relative, and to a large extent experimental, for in ever-changing group environments, good and evil, right and wrong must fluctuate with their ever-changing consequences. Some welcome this as freeing mankind for indefinite experiment in virtue and in vice, or what used to be called by such names. What is quite obvious, however, is that it must break up all mutual confidence between human beings and between nations. If there are no fixed and immovable standards and duties how can there possibly be such confidence ? How can I count on the decency and honour of my neighbour if he is free to experiment in shifty ways whenever the spirit moves him ? And if there is no immutable law or standard for nations other than those maintained because of their advantageousness in the struggle for group existence, what hope is there of their escaping from the grip of that black fear which is to-day launching them anew on the race for armaments, with what everybody of reason and

goodwill knows will be the dire and inevitable consequence? Freedom to experiment may be bought at too dear a price. But a stable and yet progressive society even of the nations can be built on the firm foundation of a moral order of the universe. It can be built and maintained, I believe, if men will have faith in God. While I have been writing this book the world has been witnessing the tragic failure of the nations of Europe to live up to their pledged word of honourable obligation to the League of Nations. I cannot but remember that I once heard the late Bishop Brent tell the story how, at the time of the framing of that scheme for the peace of the world, he wrote President Wilson begging him to do all that he could to get the name of God into the Covenant of the League. Wilson replied that he entirely agreed with him, but that it was utterly impossible. So the Covenant remains a covenant between nation and nation, and not like the Biblical covenants, which no doubt suggested the name,¹ a covenant between man and God. No Supreme Judge is recognised as over all. When that happens absoluteness goes out of moral obligation and expediency takes its place. And under that rule it may be expedient, not only that one man may be unjustly sacrificed, but that one nation should be the victim. So confidence goes, and when confidence goes fear comes in.

(4) Further, it is only under the larger spiritual view of the universe, as we have seen, that we can

¹ It is interesting to note that the two men who had most to do with the founding of the League of Nations, President Wilson and General Smuts, were both bred in the tradition of the Reformed Church, which historically has made much of the theocracy and the covenants.

fully explain either the mathematical order or the gratuitous beauty of the natural world. God Himself has put His mind and heart into His creation, and His imagination as well, and He has made it the high calling of His children, as Kepler said, "to think His thoughts after Him," to share in His own joy in His Creation, and even themselves to become in their human measure, creators of new forms of beauty in colour, form and sound.

I believe, then, that we have broad and solid ground in the very nature of the world and of human life for the belief that that world is a spiritual and purposive order, and that that view of it which maintains that it is fundamentally non-rational and non-moral, because material, is narrow and unsound. The same is true of the refined modern version of the older Materialism such as that presented in Professor Alexander's *Space, Time and Deity*, known as Naturalism.

We have reached these general conclusions as to the spiritual foundations of the world, it will be noted, without travelling into the region of what is usually known as special revelation, the historical tradition which lies behind the Bible and the Christian Church. The argument has been based on the values and validities of the moral life and confirmed by certain broad and unmistakable characters of the natural world.

In recent decades a school of theologians has appeared which repudiates the whole of what has been called "Natural Theology," confines revelation to the Word of God contained in the Bible, and rests its conviction of the divine character of that revelation solely on the force of its appeal to

man's spiritual consciousness, and in particular to his sense of being a sinner, with the internal division and confusion which that entails, and his desperate need for that message of divine grace which at once speaks intimately home to his need, and carries with it the assurance of its own truth. That this is all true in what it affirms of the greatness of God's grace and its self-witnessing power I should never question. But the wholesale repudiation of inquiry into any reflection upon Nature and the soul of man as being of value towards an understanding of God's ways with Nature and mankind seems to me a dangerous mistake, which is due to a reaction against an over-estimate of what these characters of the world can tell us about its Creator, rather than to a solid positive estimate of their real though limited value.

If God really created the world it must surely be very disquieting if the world shows no signs of Him. If on the other hand, as is argued, the world is no doubt full of signs of its Maker, but man is so blinded by sin that he cannot discern God either through his intelligence or his moral nature, then it seems difficult to see how he should be able to recognise the divine Word of God's grace when it comes to him. If we say that he is utterly unable even to do that, unless by supernatural illumination which is unconditionally given to some and withheld also by the divine Will from others, then we are left with the old dreary controversy as to how we can believe God to be Absolute Goodness, when He creates men involved in a "mass of perdition" from which they cannot possibly escape save by His fiat, and leaves them to perish when He

could have saved them. That way of thought in our modern age must in the end lead, I believe, to an Omnipotent Being above Good and Evil, a fatalistically determined humanity, and the disappearance of personal immortality—in a word to Pantheism. Surely there is a better way of explaining the universe, at whose creation, we are told in an ancient Biblical writing, all the morning stars sang together and all the Sons of God shouted for joy. The whole position seems to me to ignore the fact that the validity of the appeal of the Word of God's grace to man presupposes the validity of man's consciousness of sin and need. That again presupposes some dim consciousness of the Divine, and of the validity of our moral consciousness, when it testifies to the radical difference between good and evil. Further, it presupposes man's freedom, for how can there be real guilt, if I am fatalistically doomed to feel and act? There is here at the very basis of the "Dialectic Theology" a whole nest of unexamined presuppositions, which are all challenged to the roots by the aggressive Naturalism of to-day. I do not think, therefore, that this age of all ages is one in which Christians can refuse to give a reason for the faith that is in them, or can leave any skeleton chambers of thought unopened.

Therefore with deep respect for the representatives of the Dialectic Theology, and the services which they have done in our day to the fuller recognition of the uniqueness of the Biblical revelation, and in the practical region, to the defence of the independence of the Christian Church against an almost overwhelming pagan nationalism,

I cannot agree with their repudiation of all such reasoning as is contained in this lecture. General revelation comes far short of the fuller knowledge which I believe God has given us of Himself. But the knowledge which it gives is real, and all truth is of Him.

VI

PROVIDENTIALISM

IN the two last lectures we reached the conclusion that those elements in the universe that the purely scientific account failed to explain, taken together with the fact that there can be such a thing as science itself, led to the conclusion that the world is a spiritual system originated and controlled for spiritual ends. The pivot of that argument was found in the moral consciousness of mankind. Every man can formulate it for himself by asking the question, "Is it true that I ought to do the best that I know?" If that is true universally, indeed we may go farther and say that if ever it is true of any one decision of any one man, then the naturalistic theory of the universe breaks up and we must go in quest of some other view that can contain unconditional obligation. There is here, as I have said, an element of moral decision as well as intellectual judgment. I do not know that the rest of these lectures will have much or any meaning at all to anyone who cannot make up his mind on this one crucial point. But if he can make up his mind that there is anything that he is unconditionally bound to do, and will think out a view of the world in harmony with that conviction, I think that he must leave Naturalism behind him and enter a greater world of thought, and, in vague and dim outline at first, perhaps, begin to see the

living God. I have endeavoured, also, to show that that spiritual view of the universe is the only one that can at once include the scientific account and explain those realities and values that escape through the meshes of the net of science. There comes glimmering up also upon the cloudy horizon of our modern perplexities the vision of the world as a moral system: God working out His unchanging purpose through night and day, storm and calm, towards the "one far-off divine event." We turn to our Humanist friends and say, "Why cannot you believe in Him too? Where is the insuperable obstacle?" Apart from the difficulty relating to science which now lies behind us, and that relating to Evil that lies ahead, there is another of a different kind. It is a practical difficulty and, so far as Western Humanism is concerned, is secondary to the other two.

Science, it is believed, has made God superfluous, and the existence of Evil proves Him to be incredible. These two positions are accepted by all the Humanists.

But when we come to the third point there is in Western Humanism a significant difference of opinion. The deeper minds among them frankly admit that the emptying of the heavens, and the vanishing of the hope of immortality is a great human tragedy, and they stoically accept the human situation.

Of this mood Mr Krutch's book on *The Modern Temper* is the best expression. But Mr Huxley and Mr Haydon hold the view that faith in God is not only superfluous or incredible but positively mischievous. Their argument is that belief in God

has the inevitable effect of making men throw on God's Providence the labour for humanity that man ought to take on his own shoulders, and therefore that faith is a kind of dangerous opiate. I shall consider this briefly because it appears only occasionally in the Humanist writers of the West, and, I think, is rather an afterthought than a very serious difficulty. In the Eastern or Russian form of naturalistic Humanism it is, of course, a main position, "Religion is dope. It is the opiate of the peoples." Stated in that strident form the theory goes, of course, clean against far too many of the ascertained facts of the history of religion to be permanently tolerated by open-minded students. In history religion is too often seen as protest and appeal to the sovereign Power over all against the enormities of this present world to make such a general theory tenable. What has Bolshevism, one asks, to make of the Hebrew prophets? Were they dispensers of an opiate of acquiescence in social wrongs? An account of religion which ignores prophecy is obviously too partisan to be scientific. Karl Marx and his Bolshevist disciples, in forming their theories of religion as a whole, were obviously thinking of the socially and politically conservative type of religion with which as revolutionary agitators they had to do. The result when applied to religion generally has been a mere caricature. The element of protest and appeal runs through all religion. It is a cry to God for a better life, not only in the life to come, but in this world as well. That it has been perverted into an opiate in certain periods and regions may be true, for that like all things

human, like science and art for instance, it may be abused, is undoubted. But, as even a passable account of religion, the opiate theory is the merest travesty of the facts. When we turn from Bolshevism to Western Humanism, it is significant that this position is far more rarely and guardedly taken. Indeed, except in Mr Julian Huxley's *Religion Without Revelation*, and Mr Haydon's *Quest of the Ages*, it is hardly expressed at all. But as they lay some emphasis on it, it cannot be ignored. In a passage summing up the advantages of doing away with the idea of a personal God, Mr Huxley says, "The release of God from the anthropomorphic disguise of personality also produces release from another vice which we may term Providentialism. God provides for the sparrow, we are told; how much more for man? And so this beneficent Power will always provide. Divine Providence is an excuse for the poor whom we will have always with us; for the human improvidence which produces whole broods of children without reflection or care as to how they shall live; for not taking action when we are lazy; or, more rarely, for justifying the action we do take when we are energetic. From the point of view of the future destiny of man the present is a time of clash between the idea of Providentialism and the idea of Humanism—human control by human effort in accordance with human ideals. If Providentialism wins, even if it wins only in the domain of the soul and the religious life, humanity is doomed to stagnation, or to destruction, the material and the spiritual side of life being in disharmony."¹

¹ *Religion Without Revelation*, p. 18.

Faith in God's Providence, according to this remarkable passage, is a narcotic for the love of one's kind, and the active labour for their good which ought to follow from it. The whole passage is so remote from reality and so glaringly discordant with the facts of human life that one's interest tends for the moment to pass from the accusation to the accuser. How did he come to believe it? He must surely have been very unfortunate, for one thing, in the Christians he has known whose energy of faith in God's Providence dulled their practical energies of their love for their kind. And I fear that it is only too obvious that in the wide range of his culture he has read very little Christian biography and has a blind eye for Christian history. It takes some hardihood for anyone, in English-speaking lands at least,¹ to maintain that faith in God's Providence deadens the beneficent energies of love. One thinks, to limit one's survey to our fellow countrymen, of Lord Shaftesbury, Florence Nightingale, General Booth, Livingstone, Gordon and a whole host of less conspicuous men and women who have shown amazing persistence of courage and self-sacrifice in the war with poverty, slavery and vice of every kind, and whose biographies disclose unmistakably that their faith in God, instead of dulling their noble energies, created and sustained them. Citations in abundance might be given to prove this from their books, letters and journals.

To anyone who has any reasonable acquaintance

¹ By using that limiting phrase I am not, of course, expressing any doubt that what is true in these lands is true elsewhere, but simply confining our thought to what is most familiar.

with great religious personalities, in all the Christian ages at least, true Christianity instead of being an opiate appears as the most powerful of all sources of enterprise for the good of mankind. Conversely the real doubters and sceptics are not found among such men and women of practical enterprise for human good, but in most cases they are men and women of the study, the "spectators of all time and existence." Those actively engaged in great practical enterprises of danger and sacrifice are temperamentally much more sympathetic to faith than are scholars and thinkers. Goethe has pointed this out somewhere, has asked the reason, and has discovered it in the fact that men of action, intent on the achievement of some great aim, are well aware that the utmost that they can do in the way of prevision cannot nearly cover the field of contingencies, and that the knowledge of this devastating chapter of accidents would paralyse them without intuitive trust. They must believe in something, even though it be only their own star or destiny. Of course this does not prove that that "something" is there, but it does to some extent explain why real faith is not the mother of inaction and acquiescence, but often of titanic energy and amazing endurance.

The truth is that Mr Huxley, in my judgment, has got the picture all wrong, because he greatly under-estimates the magnitude of the task that lies before humanity if it is to survive, and in the end attain even that modified Kingdom of Man for which he and his brother Humanists hope. They are, one and all, generous-minded men, working with a view of the world which is paralyingly

discouraging and dark. We cannot but remember that on the view of Naturalism, whatever victories science may achieve, whatever progress men may make in reason and goodwill, the fundamental human situation is, and always must be, tragic, inasmuch as almighty Nature is regardless of our lot, indifferent to good or evil, and, in a word, on a lower moral plane than we her children. All that scientific and moral progress can ever achieve is at best a lengthening of the chain that binds us all. And when turning from Nature to man who is to conquer Nature and rise above himself, what is he, after all, but the highest of the animal world, with an animal ancestry immeasurably longer than his human period, and a savage pre-history immensely longer than the history of civilisation, and with all that ambiguous heredity working in his blood. Surely there is something defective in the outlook of any man who believes that we shall strengthen the cause of humanitarian progress by destroying faith in the sovereignty and providence of God. Has he really grasped the realities of the situation, measured the forces of evil that are against us, and the pitiful inadequacy of our merely human resources for even the earthly salvation of mankind? He and men like him seem to me to be living in the afterglow of a faith which they have believed themselves compelled to abandon, and seeing the world in hues that cannot last. They are in this typical of the whole age of rationalism, with its sanguine faith in reason and enlightenment and liberty, equality and fraternity, in inevitable "progress," and the spread of education and in an associated world of enduring peace. It

was a great age in many ways, and it achieved great things for human comfort, dignity and happiness, simply because it believed them possible. No enlightened human being wishes to go back to the state of things that existed before it came. But the real trouble was that it did not go deep enough. Men in our day have been again finding out that human beings are more swayed by passion and prejudice than by reason, that scientific knowledge can be appallingly perverted, that progress is by no means inevitable, that a free and democratic Press may be a most powerful means of debasing and corrupting intelligence, and that free institutions may become so corrupt and futile that great modern nations may abandon them for tyrannies in the vain hope of bettering their lot, and that Europe, having seen the vision of world-wide peace plain enough for once to frame the constitution of a League of Nations, should deliberately turn aside and be disobedient to that heavenly vision. It is in a world like this that Mr Huxley wishes men to abandon faith in God lest it should prevent them from doing their best themselves to put things right. The supreme danger of our own time is the want of hope, for nothing great and enduring can ever be achieved in human affairs without hope. It was precisely because the "enlightenment" hoped and believed in man, and in the rationality and beneficence of the universe, that it did such lasting service to mankind. What is supremely needed to-day is the restoration of that hope on a firmer and broader basis than it knew. In mere Nature, as we have seen, there is no such basis. The one possible basis is the reawakening of faith in the

living God, sovereign, just and loving, who has created man in His own image, and made him for life everlasting.

It may be said that the beneficent practical consequences of faith are no valid grounds for believing in God. That is of course true, but the validity of faith is not the point in question. Mr Huxley's argument is that faith in God must have the practical consequence of crippling and even paralysing all human enterprise of social good. I believe that this runs clean counter to normal human experience, and I believe that the reason for that is the simple fact that faith alone can give courage now and always, for the unending struggle for the ever-expanding life of mankind. Naturalism gives no such hope. Mr Lippmann and Mr Krutch see that far more clearly than Mr Huxley, and their stoical view of the human situation corresponds far more intimately to the grim realities of the cosmos, as Naturalism conceives it, than Mr Huxley's modified optimism.

It is certainly one of the strangest of all the features of the present confused situation that in both East and West intelligent human beings should have come to think of Christianity as "an opiate of the peoples," and faith in God's providence as a hindrance to social service of one's kind. No doubt we in the Churches can always say with truth that when men do not wish to retain God in their knowledge, there is nothing that they will not say to excuse their own unbelief. But is it altogether just or safe to content ourselves with that explanation? It was my fortune during the war to address a singular company of youth at

a camp of the Student Christian Movement at Swanwick. They were the men and women who had fled across the Channel from the universities of Belgium before the advancing German armies—spindrift of the great storm. They were a strange medley of races and faiths and unfaiths. Wounded Belgians, British, Russian and Polish Jews, most of them were atheists of the communist type, and as they could not understand the addresses and discussions that were going on in other parts of the camp, they were in a conference tent of their own. In speaking to them about Christ, I had said that to me He was the greatest of all optimists. I saw at once that there was a stir of surprise, and at the close was besieged by protesters. What could I possibly mean? Christianity was essentially a pessimistic view of life. The answer was obvious: Christianity, if it was anything at all, was a religion of faith, hope and love. What did these virtues mean? Faith meant unbounded confidence in God as the sovereign Father of mankind. Hope meant faith in the ultimate victory of the good. Love meant that human beings were worthy of our loyalty and affection. Did they call that a pessimism? There was no answer. I may add that Dr Glover, who was also a speaker, portrayed to them the Jesus of History, as a student of antiquity after much labour on the sources, saw Him. So astonished were they that the bookstall was besieged for copies of the Gospels, and they were seen sitting on the grass all over the park reading them to see if the picture were true. The whole experience was a glimpse deep into the heart of young Europe, and could not but raise the question:

What has the Christian Church been about that such surprising ignorance should prevail as to its message and the true nature of its Lord? Later on I had a long talk with one of the ablest of these students, a Russian. He said to me, "You will be surprised to find so many of my countrymen materialists." I said that I was, that it seemed to me that Materialism was a philosophy congenial to disillusioned middle age rather than to youth. The answer was, "They are one and all revolutionaries. They cannot endure the enormities of the present regime. The revolutionary ideas have come to them in terms of Karl Marx and his followers, and they read no books on the subject that are not in the footnotes of reference in these books." Here again one cannot but ask: What has the Christian Church been doing, either in Britain or in Russia, that such fantastic things should be believed about God and Christ and faith within the sphere of Christendom? Faith in God the foe of practical love! Religion the "opiate of the peoples"! What kind of faith has the Church been showing? What kind of religion has it diffused that such things should be believed by educated youth? Yet for educated men and women in the full tradition of Western civilisation and in possession, as noble literature at least, of the sacred writings, it is hard to make the same excuse as for the young revolutionaries of Eastern Europe. Turn to the facts of history. Is it really the case that a firm faith in God's sovereignty led to quietism and apathy in the cause of human welfare and freedom? I have taken modern instances and confined myself to our own country.

Let us take the broad canvas of European history and take there only one instance out of many. I am not here to hold a brief for Calvinism. Personally I do not hold Calvin's own form of belief in Absolute Predestination. I think it extreme. But just because it is an extreme form of belief in God's sovereign providence I should expect, if there were anything in Mr Huxley's view, to find it confirmed by the history of Calvinism. Now does that story bear out the thesis that faith in God's providence paralyses man's vital energies in the battle for the good, or Marx's theory that "religion is the opiate of the peoples"? It is notorious that it does not. Let the great Calvin memorial in Geneva bear witness. The idea of that colossal monument is that out of the faith of Calvin were born all the free governments of the modern world. Right and left of the austere figure of the Reformer of Geneva are William the Silent of Holland, Coligny of France, John Knox of Scotland, a Pilgrim Father of New England, and Oliver Cromwell—Calvinists all. When we think of such men we do not think of pietistic acquiescence, or of their faiths as "an opiate of the peoples," we think of firm endurance on the very edge of despair against overwhelming odds, and of volcanic activity for the City of God. Let us hear a tribute to Geneva from a gifted and learned Unitarian historian: "So far is Calvinism from producing slackness of will and feebleness of character that Calvinists have been the most strenuous of men." The true Calvinist "feels himself to be an instrument of the Divine Will and bends to whatever toil he undertakes in the unshakable conviction

that he is on the side of God. How copious a spring of moral energy lies in this thought I need not tell you. . . . Calvinism was the form of faith in the strength of which the Dutch Republic was sustained, and the American Republic founded, to propagate which Tyndale gave the English people the Bible in their own tongue and with it his life ; which formed the royal intellect of Cromwell and inspired the majestic verse of Milton. Shall I say more, or is not this enough ? ”

I grant that there is a paradox here. Why should belief in a cosmic dictator have produced democratic institutions and civil freedom ? I take it that the reason was that the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries were the age of the Absolute Monarchies, Francis I in France, Charles V and Philip II in Spain ; and, in a new phase of the struggle, of the Stuart tyranny in Britain. Everywhere these absolute monarchs set themselves to destroy the Reform and the Puritanism that followed it. Everywhere Calvinism said to these absolute monarchs : “ You are all usurpers ; only One is absolute, and in His name we defy you all ! ” Without that faith the battle would have been too hard. There would have been no hope, and hopelessness means paralysis or else individualist stoicism or devout quietism. But from faith in the Divine Sovereignty these men drew inexhaustible courage and endurance. The Ultimate and Absolute Power was on their side, and though they might fall the battle must go on to victory. Their business was to advance His battle-front and win ground for those behind them, and leave the issue to their

¹ Beard's Hibbert Lectures on *The Reformation*, pp. 257 and 261.

Commander. The spirit which thus flamed up in them was one of the most stubborn and formidable activity which wrought itself out not only in the overthrow of the absolute monarchs, but in the creation of the free modern states in the old world, and the pioneering of new lands where the Kingdom of God might be realised.

I do not think that the situation has essentially changed since the days of Calvin. The struggle for the highest life of mankind is always one against great odds, which may well lead the bravest soldiers of the spirit to despair were it not for the assurance of Sovereign Power, Justice and Wisdom over all. Where that faith is rejected men must find something to fill the great void. They instinctively feel their own inadequacy to cope with the powers that are against them. They believe in the intrinsic worth and right of their cause, and derive from that their faith that the nature of things is on their side. Communism itself furnishes an impressive illustration of this. Dialectical Materialism, which is its creed, is a strange hybrid which retains enough of the Hegelian Idealism from which it sprang to believe in an inevitable law of indefinite progress, and from this, which is really quite inconsistent with Materialism, it derives much of its energy and staying power. The theory is the Communist's way of persuading himself that the nature of things is on his side, and, unlike Mr Huxley, he finds it not a narcotic but a stimulant. But none the less, it is a poor substitute for faith in the living God. There is an impressive passage in President Masaryk's *The Making of a State*¹ which I would set alongside Mr Huxley's

¹ Page 316.

singular impeachment of faith in God's providence, the words of a man who has made a nation against the words of a scholar and student. The writer when he wrote them was homeward bound across the Atlantic, and was asking what the Odyssey of the wanderings which had made his nation free had to teach him. It had driven in upon him, he says, the conviction of a great overruling purpose, which had inspired and sustained him, which had sometimes thwarted and overruled him, but never slackened in its control, and which had been over all the warring nations, using them for ends which were higher and wider than theirs. No more interesting human document has come out of the War, for perhaps no man has contributed more to its permanent results or more deeply understood its lessons: "Who at the beginning of the war expected the overthrow of Russia or the establishment of a communist republic? Who foresaw the revolution that came forth from the war and altered the political face of Europe and the whole world? Shakespeare has put it very wisely:

"Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,
When our deep plots do pall; and that should teach us
There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will.

Yet a belief that Providence watches over us and the world is no reason for fatalistic inactivity, but rather for optimistic concentration of effort, for a direct injunction to work determinedly for an idea. Only thus are we entitled to expect the so-called lucky accident that springs from the inner logic of life and history, and to trust in God's help."

I would set yet another passage from an older writer beside that disastrous passage from Mr Huxley's volume which I have quoted at the beginning of this lecture, and the assertion that religion is the opiate of the peoples:

“What shall I more say? for the time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, and David and Samuel and the prophets; who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, waxed mighty in war, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.”

VII

REVELATION

WE have dealt with two of the reasons given by the Humanist writers for the rejection of faith in God. We come now to the third—the presence of Evil in the world. This is the oldest and by far the greatest of their difficulties. It is, indeed, the characteristic difficulty of Theism. In the polytheistic religions it hardly seems to exist. The gods are in the main nature divinities, and the destroying as well as preserving powers of nature are mirrored in the pantheons, and simply accepted and dreaded. It has been truly said there is no devil in the heathen cosmologies, because there is no need for him, his functions being so efficiently discharged by one or other of the gods. But the moment men rose or returned to the faith in one sole Sovereign, Just and Pure God, the problem became acute. Why was there so much evil in a world created and governed by Him? Greek scepticism put the problem in the form of a dilemma. Since there is so much evil in the world, God cannot be both good and almighty. If He is almighty He cannot be good. If He is good He cannot be almighty. Indian thought took the pantheistic road. It conserved some kind of moral order by its doctrine of an inexorably just and universal law of retribution, or Karma, which pursued the offender through all worlds, punishing

moral with physical evil. But the Supreme Being was impersonal and beyond both Good and Evil. How profoundly the problem influenced the Hebrew mind we shall presently see.

That its apparent insolubility from the standpoint of monotheism has caused many in our day to lose all faith in the God of their fathers I have no doubt whatever. We have to remember that a very large proportion of the manhood and womanhood of our modern world has passed through one of the greatest upheavals of Evil that the world has ever known. The men experienced it in the trenches and in the base camps, the women, many of them, endured long-drawn-out days of suspense and horror, and later on suffered in lives impoverished by the loss of lover, husband or children, through the slaughter of the flower of a whole generation of men.

Twenty years ago many of us older people had the opportunity of living and working in the great base camps in that generation of men which has been truly called "a lonely generation." They had been spending their earlier years in the natural happiness of youth, all unaware of the fires that had been smouldering underfoot till suddenly they came flickering up through the grass and flowers. How well they faced the ordeal in the field we know. They went through almost all that mediæval imagination pictured as the sufferings of the damned, death by torture and rending of the body by poison or by flame; the stench of the unburied dead, the imminent shadow of their own death, final exile from all they loved, the wholesale loss of their friends. In the great base camps we older

men and women did what we could to help them and learned something of their new thoughts about themselves, their fellows and the great universe which contained such horror. Nobody who knew anything of human nature could have much doubt as to the spiritual situation, or can be at all surprised to-day as to the causes of the tides of pessimistic thought through which we have been passing.

The survivors of these men are among those who are the dominant influences to-day in the world of action and also in the world of journalism, literature and art. Once more the problem of Evil has raised its formidable head. Under its pressure many have lost faith altogether in God, in the spiritual world and in the life to come. I do not think that we can understand the mind of our age toward religion without realising the new prominence which that experience of Evil has had upon the fundamental faith in God. Nor can we understand the peculiar laxity in sexual morality manifest in much of our literature to-day if we take it as simply a wholesome protest against Victorian prudery. It is also largely an after-product of the unnatural conditions of separation under which men and women lived during the war, and the evils which resulted from this, of which every base camp bore too obvious witness. I believe, therefore, that Christian thought to-day has to grapple with new determination and thoroughness with this ancient problem of Evil. We may not be able to solve it, nor need our inability to present a complete solution disturb our faith that there is such a solution, but we may be able to advance the question a stage by showing

how fruitful the past endeavour to solve it has been. It may have been enough in past centuries for the Church to confess that the mystery was insoluble. In those days traditional faith was in possession in a way in which it is not to-day, and so men were willing to accept insoluble mysteries. To-day the deepest questions are raised and pressed home, and rival schemes of thought, both positive and sceptical, are brought forward. We must to-day, if we are to follow the apostolic injunction to give a reason for the hope that is in us, do our utmost to solve this fundamental problem.

As we have seen, modern thought has by no means disposed of the problem by simply discarding belief in God. Instead of impeaching Him we find it impeaching Nature, and saying to her, "Why hast thou made me thus?" The problem of Evil is, in fact, one which no serious thought can to-day evade. Let us allow two of the Humanist writers, however, to state it for themselves.

I shall begin with Mr Lippmann's statement: "The greatest of all perplexities in theology has been to reconcile the infinite goodness of God with His omnipotence. Nothing puts a greater strain upon the faith of the common man than the existence of utterly irrational suffering in the universe, and the problems which tormented Job still trouble every thoughtful man who beholds the monstrous iniquities of Nature. If there were no pain in the world except that which was felt by responsible beings who had knowingly transgressed some law of conduct there would, of course, be no problem of Evil. Pain would be nothing but a rational punishment. But the pain which

is suffered by those who according to all human standards are innocent, by children and by animals, for example, cannot be fitted into any rational theory of reward and punishment. It has never been. The classic attempts to solve the problem of evil invariably falsify the premises. This falsification may for a time satisfy the inquirer, but it does not settle the problem. That is why the problem is ever presenting itself again.”¹

Let us now hear Mr Huxley. What would be the consequences, he asks, of our rejecting the idea of a Personal God ?

“First and foremost the thinking world would see, with a sigh of profound relief, the cutting of that Gordian knot, in which man has tied up the absolute goodness and omnipotence of God with the evil of the world. This has always been a stumbling-block to belief. When natural catastrophes occur, and when we see thousands of innocent men suffer for no cause, as in the earthquake of Messina or the Mississippi floods ; when diseases strike blindly right and left, like the influenza epidemic of 1918 with its ten million victims, or the Plague in London in 1665, or in India to-day ; when we see children born deformed, deaf, blind or crippled to a life of suffering and hardship ; or an idiot child produced by the best of married couples ; when we see the success of men who are cruel, unscrupulous, or definitely wicked, and the hard lot of others who are industrious and upright ; most of all when we are confronted by a gigantic catastrophe like the war, in which not blind outer Nature, but our own human nature is involved, and

¹ *Preface to Morals*, p. 203.

man's best impulses of devotion, courage, intellect, endurance, self-sacrifice, pity, are all in one way or another employed upon the task of killing other men by thousands and by tens of thousands—then is it difficult for many to believe in a personal God.”¹

The issue is here fairly raised, and we who are Christian men and women who believe that we possess a Divine revelation are bound to ask, first of all, what it has to say about it.

We have hitherto been confining our examination of the riddle of the world to the obvious characters of that world itself and have reached some broad conclusions as to its fundamental nature. We have been endeavouring to discover the meaning of the world in the light of what we can learn from reasoning which takes full account not only of the world of Nature, but of the conscience of men. But we have not brought into the field of discussion what has usually been known as “revelation,” and which is embodied for Protestants supremely in the Bible and for Roman Catholics in the Church and the Bible. Even within these limits “philosophical Theism” has much to say about the problem of Evil, as not a few even of those Gifford Lecturers who have strictly observed the terms of Lord Gifford's bequest² have shown. Nevertheless I think it could easily, also, be shown that in so doing they have drawn deeply on traditional Christianity for their moral conceptions and even, though the debt may not have been fully confessed, on its fundamental principles of belief.

¹ *Religion Without Revelation*, pp. 14 and 15.

² Lecturers under this Trust are expected to treat their subject “without reference to or reliance upon any supposed exceptional or so-called miraculous revelations.”

Writing under no such limitations, I propose in the rest of these lectures to use the full resource of special revelation in dealing with this ancient difficulty.

But before going on to that discussion it is necessary to give one's reasons for believing that we have such a special revelation, and that the matter which it contains is every whit as trustworthy for the solution of the riddle as are those natural characters of the universe, and those judgments of conscience which have brought us, it may be hoped, to a spiritual interpretation of the world.

I

That these characters and judgments contain a true revelation of God I believe. This extension of the term is etymologically justified. Revelation means the taking away of the "veil" which, as the prophet Isaiah said, "lies upon the face of all the peoples." And as these illuminating elements in the Nature world and these judgments of human conscience do disclose the spiritual nature of the world, they are true revelations. To deny this seems to me arbitrary. But it by no means follows that all manifestations of God are on the same plane. In my judgment they differ so profoundly that I can easily understand the jealousy with which some theologians¹ to-day protest against this

¹ The vehement denial that there is any divine revelation anywhere save in the Word of God in the Scriptures, of Barth and the dialectical school of theology, is, I think, to be understood as a protest against the depression of the Christian revelation towards the level of other faiths, current in Germany before the war, and in the later glorification

extension of the term revelation from the manifestation of God's grace in the Gospel to the wider and vaguer region of Nature and the soul of man. I think, however, that it is possible to guard against this without narrowing the grace and wisdom of God.

(1) When we study a great poem we say that the creator of it is revealed by the largeness of its conception, the vividness of the imagery, the force and grace of the diction. In Masson's *Life of Milton* the biographer tells us that "Lycidas" first appeared in a composite volume of elegaic verses in memory of a young scholar, Henry King, who had been drowned in the Irish Channel. He gives us, rather grimly, samples of the other contributions, and then lets Milton speak :

Yet once more, O ye laurels, and once more,
Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,
And with forced fingers rude
Scatter your leaves before the mellowing year.

We are watching the flight of the young eagle. Now it is in that kind of way that we should think of God as revealing Himself in Nature. We look out upon that mighty spectacle, and it fills us with admiration and awe that may rise to worship. But it is not personally addressed to us, though we are privileged to behold it. It may be that with

of "blood and soil" as media of the divine revelation in the post-war period. But surely the Christian revelation "could not be a revelation if it were not also a corroboration. Its light would not be known as light if, apart from it, the world were in utter darkness" (Bishop Neville Talbot, *Great Issues*, pp. 3 and 4).

deeper knowledge of God, derived from other sources, we may find new depths in God in and through Nature. It is not an uncommon thing to find a man, through "conversion," finding new depths of wonder and beauty in Nature :

Heaven above is deeper blue,
Earth around a fairer green,
Something shines in every hue
Christless eyes have never seen.

Nor am I denying that God may and does send even personal messages to His children through Nature. I believe that He can send such messages through anything that He has made. I am thinking rather of Nature as it appears in general to mankind, before the deeper intimacy which comes to us through "grace" is acquired, and even at this earlier stage it seems to me that we have real, though indirect revelation. Nature discloses God's greatness and wisdom and beauty in the world which He has made. This, with which much of the reasoning in the earlier parts of this volume is concerned, is usually called general revelation. It came from God. It is there whether we discern it or not. It is significant, in part it takes away the dense veil of mystery. Why should we not call it what it is—Revelation?

(2) But when we turn from Nature to the human soul, we come into another zone of revelation, first of all, in that knowledge of the Good and the Right, which is possessed in very varying degrees by every human being. There is a subtle difference here from that indirect revelation of which we have been thinking. In the former case

we watch God working. It is as if in the latter, and especially in all matters of moral direction, He turned and spoke to us, in the "imperatives" of duty. That sense of the moral imperative is no doubt mediated and influenced by the society round us, and our apprehension of it varies with our own faithfulness or unfaithfulness. But that there is a great deal more in conscience than the vote of the social group or nation or humanity, or even the depths of our own reason, we have already seen. It is the voice of God Himself that speaks, warning and commanding men and women. We have something here much more intimate and personal in the way of revelation than we can get through the order and beauty of Nature. Reality presses in upon us with its imperative demands of purity, sincerity and justice, calling for our decision and obedience. Conscience, when all has been said as to its history and its errors, is assuredly a channel of divine revelation to mankind, for, as we have seen, it takes away part of the "veil" of mystery from the universe.

Further, there is in the depths of man's heart yet another channel of divine communication. I believe that in every human soul there is something over and above what has been mentioned, a potentiality of direct awareness of the Divine. In many human beings it is little more than a dim awareness, and awakens into certainty and awe only in moments of crisis. It is found in everything that can be called a religion. It has been called a feeling of dependence, but it is more than an emotional condition, for mere emotions are subjective, and this is the awareness of a

Supernatural that awakens emotions in us of what we call religious awe.

I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thought ; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man ;
A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.

This awareness of the supernatural or numinous is found even in the most primitive religions. I do not think that along the line of moral obligation we can explain more than a part of the religious experience of mankind, even outside the domain of special revelation. Man does not think of the gods or his God only as those who forbid or command. They are those whom he trusts and whose presence reinforces and consoles him, especially in the hour of his greatest need. He takes refuge instinctively in them, which he would not do if they were simply imperative beings. To give a full account of this highest capacity of man, as I believe it to be, would carry us too far afield at present. I believe faith at its highest to be deeply akin to genius, that strange intuitive power of the human spirit that shoots ahead of the reasoning power and divines the end often before it is clear as to the intermediate steps. Yet it differs from genius in that it interprets the whole world, and not only a fraction of it ; in that it is confined not only to a few, but is potentially

present in all ; and, finally, in that its use and intensity are strictly conditioned by moral loyalty. It is only the pure in heart that see God. Inasmuch as this awareness is the channel whereby God communicates with man it must be the highest thing in him, the culminating point of his development.

Such monitions of duty and intuitions of faith are surely direct and personal revelations of God to men, and this is true not only of the zone of human history, illuminated by special revelation, but of non-Christian ages and lands as well. "In every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him." Are we to suppose that God did not speak to Socrates through his "daimon," that there is no direct divine illumination in Plato, no ray from heaven in Kwannon, the goddess of mercy, or the pitiful and loving Amida of the Mahayana Buddhism? Goodness and moral beauty are such wherever they are found, and assuredly they have a divine origin. We are under no necessity of denying that there is in such elements of goodness and beauty in pagan faith a revelation of God. But we can go a step farther.

(3) When we meet with any human being who has truly realised goodness, such a man himself becomes a medium of divine revelation. It is, indeed, to such revelations that most of us owe a very large part of our knowledge of God. Ask any man who believes in God to tell you how he came into this faith. He will no doubt be able to tell of many factors which led to that critical venture of the spirit, of struggles with himself and with the world, through which he won depth and unity of aim and clearness of thought, impulses

from Nature and so forth. But I believe in the great majority of cases of such attainment the determining influences are personal, written, spoken or silent. There is no such medium of divine revelation as a noble character whose root is faith in God. To have known and loved even one such man or woman is to have had a clue to the mystery of the universe which brought them into being. We reverence such men and women, and in that reverence, I believe, is deeply implied the conviction that Ultimate Reality is on their side. We cannot permanently reverence goodness if it is rooted in mere illusion. A good man, it is true, may very well have foolish illusions, but he is good by virtue of something behind the illusion. All real saints have received the light and have become transparent for it to pass through them. Surely if we believe that, they have become channels of revelation.

William James has said that for himself he could not say that he had any direct or immediate consciousness of God, but that he believed in the living God none the less, because he could not but accept the reality of the testimony of the saint and mystic to His existence. One of our own poets has put the same thought in the familiar lines :

Through such souls alone,
God, stooping, shows sufficient of His light
For us i' the dark to rise by. And I rise.

Many men and women have felt that the holy and loving life of some obscure father or mother was for them the most compelling of all reasons for believing in goodness and in God. If such lives

in some degree remove the veil of mystery that hangs over the universe, or if they make it more transparent for the eternal Light to shine through it, and if God made them what they were, why should we exclude them from being part of His revelation?

But if that be so we must carry the process of thought a stage farther. There have appeared in the history of the human race from time to time men and women of richer moral and spiritual character than others, who have profoundly influenced their ages, and after heroic moral and spiritual conflicts have raised the whole level of their peoples, and, indirectly, of all mankind. These are the prophets and sages of the race. It is through such men that the great religions of mankind have come into being. They are very unevenly distributed throughout human history in time and space, but there is a remarkable constellation of them in China, India and Greece from about the seventh to the fifth centuries before Christ, and another very remarkable series, slightly overlapping this other group, from the eighth to the fifth centuries before Christ in the little land of Palestine in the Eastern Mediterranean. There is no traceable historical connection between these groups, and the latter series has characteristics that demand its separate treatment. Later on by a full millenium Mohammed arose in Arabia.

Now, in spite of all the external difference between these men they have something in common. They have all a deep conviction that life ought to be better and happier than it is, they believe that they have discovered what is wrong with it, and

discovered at the same time the true way of life. They believe this with such intensity that they throw their whole energies into the endeavour to make it prevail. They have experienced in themselves that profound tension which has been described in its modern form in the beginning of this volume, the tension between what is and what ought to be. Are we to include all these men under the rubric of "Revelation"? Can we call them all prophets? In a general way we can, for they all to some extent made the veil thinner and more transparent than for their age and people it would have been without them. But we can only do so on the clear understanding that by so doing we are not denaturing these two great and potent words of religion: Prophecy and Revelation.

II

Both of these words, whatever their etymological meaning, are products of the Hebrew and Christian tradition. They are Biblical terms, and though we may quite rightly and legitimately use them to describe the founders of the great religions, and the truths about God, the world and the soul of man which they proclaimed, we Christians must be on our guard lest we be misunderstood in so doing. We do not believe that the Bible is simply one of the "Sacred Books of the East," like the rest, nor do we believe that the Hebrew prophets and the Christian apostles and, least of all, Jesus of Nazareth Himself, are simply men of profound moral and spiritual insight like Socrates and Confucius. Such men, we may well admit, were divinely in-

spired to explain with the light that they had, to their own age and people, the riddle of the world, and the kind of life demanded of men by that interpretation. But according to our interpretation of it there is much more in the Bible than that, and to omit this profoundly important element and, as it were, level the Bible down to the sacred books of other religions by that omission, is to denature it and deprive it of the main secret of its power. Like the other books it contains revelation, but its revelation is of a specific kind, which is why it is by theologians, not too happily it may be, called "special revelation." What is that new element ?

We may begin by saying that such sages and prophets as those we have named, Socrates, Gautama and Confucius, have the same old world before them to interpret : the Bible writers have not only this same old world, but much more of transcendent moment to all mankind, which was not contained in that old world.

Very much of the whole later argument of these lectures depends upon clearness as to this distinction, so I shall state it more fully. I shall assume that we have left the Humanist position behind us, and that the issue is not now with Naturalism, in the first instance at least, but between the believer in simple "philosophical Theism" and the believer in special revelation.

The worlds of Socrates, Gautama and Confucius differ externally as sharply as can be imagined. Athens in the later days of the Periclean age, with its white marble temples glittering in the radiant air, the deer park at Benares slumbering in the

tropic heats of the Ganges valley, and the great verdant plains of Shantung with their populous cities, were not more sharply contrasted than were the mental environment and past of their inhabitants. But the substance of the human life that ebbed and flowed round these three great teachers was the same, and the same as is around us to-day. They had the same human passions, joys and sorrows. Love and death were there, and there too was the incessant struggle between the flesh and the spirit. The same comedy, pathos and tragedy which we know in the great spectacle of human life to-day went on within the same nature environment as that which nurtures and controls us all. They had, therefore, essentially the same material as we all have for solving the same riddle, and telling us how we are to make the best of it. They differed, no doubt, in their own personal capacity, and, as we may believe, in the degree and purity of their inspiration by the Spirit of God. But the essential substance of the problem was the same for all.

Now with the writers of the Bible it is otherwise. They all proceed on the assumption that God has intervened in their history and has given them thereby a new and deeper understanding than He has given to the rest of mankind, of Himself as not only a pure and holy, but also as a gracious God. All their thought, therefore, about God and the world and the soul, unlike that of other founders of religions, is determined by this momentous creative self-revelation of God. At this stage we do not take for granted that they were right in this faith. But we shall never understand the Bible

unless we realise that from beginning to end the entire literature depends on this foundation of Divine Grace. This distinguishes it from all the other sacred books of the East, with the single exception of the Koran, which is an offshoot from Judaism, which again is dependent on the Old Testament. The claim with which the Bible comes to us is that it brings momentous new elements into the solution of the perennial problem, and that in consequence it contains the self-revelation of God in history. Clearly if that is true it may contain the solution of the problem that has so persistently haunted human thought down the ages. We have already, I believe, in our argument come a certain way towards this position.

Hitherto we have, for the most part, been examining the foundations of the Humanist position, and, finding them insecure, have been endeavouring to get down to firmer ground. Believing that we have found that ground in a spiritual universe controlled by an imperative moral purpose, we are now in quest of some positive constructive solution; some house of thought that will be habitable by civilised and rational human beings, without compelling them to utter these lamentable outcries against the enormities of a universe to which, after all, they owe the very reason and sense of justice which enable them to impeach her. In the endeavour to transcend such incoherence and to reach such a positive solution, we are met by the fact of Evil, and in order to deal fully with it we have now to deal with what claims explicitly to be Divine Revelation. How shall we

recognise such a revelation, and test it? It must, I think, shine by its own light to begin with. It must be coherent with the highest and almightiest that we know. That is to say it must be worthy of God. It must speak, also, to the realities of our condition. That, unless all that we have been seeking to prove is wrong, is undoubtedly a sinful condition, is subject to the world and exposed to mortality and seeks deliverance from that servitude. Finally, it must make sense of the world, must have something to say that throws sufficient light on the great riddle.

Now there is only one revelation that to-day in Western civilisation we need consider, and that is the revelation contained in the Bible, which all forms of the Christian religion consider as their sacred book. They believe that it contains a special revelation of God to mankind over and above all that is indirectly and directly revealed of Him in the characters of the natural universe, in the moral and religious consciousness of mankind, and through human personalities of the higher type.

We have now in this lecture to consider the nature of this special revelation and its right to the name.

There is, unfortunately, no doubt that the real witness of the Bible has been greatly obscured for many by mistaken theories about it. Two such, above all, obscure it to-day.¹

(1) The older of these, dating from about the

¹ I shall not deal in this book with the Roman Catholic theories of Revelation. Humanitarianism is a phenomenon confined to Protestant lands.

close of the Reformation Age and the period immediately following it, is the view that is called the verbal inspiration theory. In its complete form this is that every word in the Old and New Testaments was dictated or "inspired" by God Himself, so that the whole Book in all its parts was divine. This implied that all the histories were accurate in all matters of detail, that passages could be cited equally from all parts of Scripture for the "proving" of Christian doctrine, that all that Israel did under what was represented in the Old Testament as divine direction, was right and incumbent upon men to-day, and many other consequences that are almost equally in conflict both with the enlightened conscience of Christian men to-day and the plain facts of history. This was not, I think, the view of the Bible held by Martin Luther himself, the originator of the Protestant conception of the Bible. He distinguished between the Word of God or Gospel, and the Scriptures, and though with all the other Reformers he held the view that the Scriptures "contained, presented and conveyed the Word of God," he used considerable freedom of criticism of the canonical writings. But in the later period of the Reformation, and in the age of Protestant scholasticism which followed it, the supposed necessities of controversy led the Protestant Churches into perilous over-emphasis on the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. The verbal infallibility of the Sacred Writings was, in fact, a dogma which could not be maintained whenever men came to the study of these writings without the blinding preconceptions of dogmatic controversy. Whenever they ceased dictating to God the kind

of book they thought He ought to give men, and asked the humbler and wiser question: What kind of book had He actually given? the verbal inspiration theory began to collapse by its own cumbrousness and inefficiency to explain the facts.

The rise of the sciences of Nature, the development of critical methods of research, the recovery of the forgotten languages of the Nile and the Euphrates civilisations, and the reconstructions of ancient history which followed, made it ever harder to defend the verbal inspiration theory of the Scriptures, while the great modern development in comparative religion and archæology threw a flood of new light on the development of the religion of Revelation. It was realised that the theologians of the seventeenth century had not these matters before them when they formulated the older Protestant theory of verbal infallibility. Moreover it was seen that to claim infallibility for every writing in the canon was to make a most dangerous concession to the Roman Catholic Church, for, seeing that the New Testament canon was not completed till the fifth century A.D., the theory would imply that the Church which selected the canonical writings was itself infallible so far as this momentous action was concerned. It was further discerned that to ground the verbal infallibility of the Sacred Writings on the claim of the Sacred Writings themselves was dangerously like reasoning in a circle, unless it could be shown that the Scriptures had in every part that self-evidencing power which was rightly claimed for the Gospel, or at least unless they were so bound up with the Gospel that the Gospel could not be received and

believed without accepting the infallibility of every historical detail in the Bible. This could not be done. No one who took part in the writing of the Bible ever had any idea of the Bible as a whole, and there is no passage, in the entire range of the Sacred Writings, claiming for the whole that infallibility of which the theory speaks. So it has gradually succumbed by the sheer weight of evidence and by its own inherent weaknesses. We can now see why it came into being when it did. It was a controversial position forced upon Protestantism by the Roman claim to the inerrant authority of the Church. To it Protestantism rightly opposed the Bible, but wrongly ascribed to its letter the same kind of legal authority as the Romans desired for the Church. We can see now the merits by which the dogma lived as well as the defects which have caused its decay. These merits have been set in strong relief by the development of the rationalistic criticism of the Sacred Writings.

(2) This criticism has started from the position, in itself sound enough, that to begin with we have to explore the Biblical histories and literature by the usual methods of investigation, the methods that we apply, for example, to the great classics of other religions: the *Analects* of Confucius, the Buddhist *Tripitaka*, the *Memorabilia* of Xenophon, the *Dialogues* of Plato, and the Koran. When we do this with the Bible it falls at once into two literatures, the literature of the Hebrews, and the literature produced by the appearing of Jesus of Nazareth. Further analysis continues the dissolving of the sacred Book into many other books. The first six books of the Bible become a

compilation of earlier documents, while it has been shown that much of the Mosaic legislation dates from a period centuries later than Moses. The Gospels themselves are compilations of earlier documents, and one of them is written at least sixty or seventy years after the events recorded, and so on. The whole conception of one sacred book is thus dissolved, and it becomes instead a library. Not otherwise is it at first sight with the beliefs of the Bible. The science of Biblical theology which is devoted to a realistic study of what each of the Bible writers actually thought about God and the world and the soul, far from being a unity, discloses different periods and types of thought in the Old Testament, and also different standards of morality. Even in the New Testament, which covers a much shorter period, there are differing types of thought about Christ and His salvation,¹ and in the case of that writer whose epistles display his thinking most fully, the Apostle Paul, most scholars trace marked developments in his thought. In a word, the conception of the Bible as one infallibly inspired book, if the method of criticism be sound, seems to have gone for good and all.

Not otherwise was it with the personality of Jesus Christ. Rationalistic criticism proceeding on the assumption that the Gospels must be treated precisely as the early Buddhist records were treated, set to work to discern the real Jesus of history behind what it believed to be the romantic overestimate of His disciples. The result was the

¹ Most modern books on New Testament theology distinguish between the types of thought in the Synoptic Gospels and the Acts, in the Pauline Epistles, and in the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Johannine writings.

reduction of His personality to that of a prophet, although the greatest of the prophets, and of His Gospel to the proclamation of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. The entire element of the miraculous must also disappear, for we should reject it in the Buddhist record as a simple matter of course. The Gospel as a history, therefore, instead of culminating in the Resurrection and Pentecost, ends at the Cross and the Tomb in the garden. All the rest is over-belief. Now clearly this reduces divine revelation very much to a matter of human insight at its highest, and, note this, it is insight into the same old world as that which Socrates, Gautama and Confucius saw. Jesus is He who saw further into the meaning of the universe than any of these great men, and lived up to His insight more perfectly than they, and the Bible is simply the most impressive of the "Sacred Books of the East," and the greatest religious creation of man. Now, as compared with the fundamentalist view, this means that God is very much less actively interested in the salvation of mankind than used to be believed. He tends to become more and more a static Absolute Perfection, waiting for man to discover Him than a living God and Father. One must therefore press the question: Which is the morally nobler God? Here is the deep flaw in the purely rational and Humanitarian view, for surely it is axiomatic in all real theistic faith that the true God is He than whom it is impossible to conceive not only any mightier and wiser but any morally nobler Being. And the God who creates countless human spirits to press through fire and anguish and peril of human life,

and who, while Himself outside and above it, simply waits for them, does not seem to me so noble a Being as He who comes. On the Humanitarian view the Cross stands above all for the moral glory of man, on the Biblical view supremely for the glory of God. A universe, moreover, which shows us the Cross as the final reaction of the cosmos to the highest manifestation of moral beauty that mankind has reached, is surely a darker and more mysterious universe than one which contains the Resurrection.¹ And the more mysterious the universe, the remoter and further withdrawn from mankind becomes the God who created it and sustains it in being.

The "reduction" of the Christian revelation which we find in the Humanitarian version, then, extends far beyond the personality of Jesus of Nazareth, it extends to the whole view of the universe and of God Himself.

Now even if it be true that the older theory has many defects, no really religious mind can do other than admit that this narrowing of the whole conception of God has defects which are graver still. This, I think, largely explains the stubborn resistance which we still find among devout people both in Scotland and England to what they believe to be inevitably involved in modern theories of the Bible. In some cases also it accounts for secessions to the Roman Church, under which such men and women believe they can preserve their faith in the transcendent, living, intervening God, authoritatively revealing Himself to men.

About thirty years ago a deeply interesting book

¹ Bishop Talbot's *A Biblical Thoroughfare*.

was written by M. Francis de Pressensé, a very distinguished French Protestant publicist, in which at the moment he seemed on the eve of returning to the Roman Church.¹ His father had been a famous leader of the Protestants, and the son seemed to feel that he needed to explain his action. He said, in effect: "In my father's day it was different. Then we had a real Bible, a living oracle of God. To-day what have we? A heap of human documents! In the Old Testament we have the Jehovist and Elohist documents, the Deuteronomist and the Priest's Code. In the New, instead of the four Gospels, we have the Mark narrative, the Logia, the Lucan contributions, the spiritual romance of the Fourth Gospel, and Epistles some genuine and some spurious. Over against this heap of documents you have the firmly knit and infallible authority of the Holy Catholic Church and in this living Voice it is possible to recognise a Divine Authority." But de Pressensé, I believe, did not after all go over to Rome. The Dreyfus case arose, and he threw everything into what he believed to be the cause of justice and therefore, of the authoritative voice of God. The official Roman Church in France took the other side, and lost a convert. There is no doubt, however, that de Pressensé spoke out the feelings of many Protestants, especially in the earlier days of the critical movement. But there is no real deliverance in a flight to Rome, or to any authoritative living Church, Eastern or Western, for if we study the origin and history of any such Church on the same principle that nothing is to be admitted as true in the history of any one

¹ *Le Cardinal Manning.*

religion, no matter what the evidence for it may be, except what we can find some analogy for in the case of all, then all alike must be shorn down to the same purely human level, the supernatural being eliminated from them all. And when the supernatural goes, special divine authority passes also, not only from the Sacred Writings, but from the Church as well. Nor can any Church, any more than any individual, evade that austere test of its claim to revelational authority, "By their fruits ye shall know them." We stand, therefore, between two alternatives. Either, it would seem, we must accept a shrunken conception of Christianity and of Almighty God, or we must abandon the principle that the Bible is to be studied exactly as we would study any other history or literature. Are these the only alternatives? Before we accept so disastrous a conclusion it is desirable to examine this principle a little more closely.

Be it noted, first of all, that if it were strictly true it would at once exclude the possibility of there being any unique revelations. The matter is settled before we begin to examine the evidence. Further, if God should manifest Himself in a unique way in any human being we should never be able to discover it. If God should incarnate Himself in any human being the fact would be undiscoverable, for there would be no real historical analogies in any other religion.¹ I think that all Theists at least would admit that if God did so reveal Himself it would be far and away the most important event in history. We can hardly deny that, however

¹ No Western historian, of course, believes in the historicity of Hindu myths of Incarnation.

unlikely we may think it, such acts of divine grace are possible. Yet if we come to accept this principle as final criterion we should by so doing exclude from our knowledge the greatest things that history might contain. No consistent Theist, at least, can therefore possibly entertain it without scrutiny as a sound initial principle of historical research. The truth is that it is a good pragmatical rule, a good working principle to begin with, but nothing more. If adequate facts can be brought against it we must in the interests of reality cast it aside.

We may take an illustration from the present position in biology. There are many men of science to-day attacking the problem of Life, and a large number of them believe that all living process can be explained in terms of chemistry. Others, again, deny this absolutely, but all would admit that it is a good rule to go on trying to account for living process in chemical terms, so long as it does not blind men to what is there in the facts. The hypothesis ought to be tried out and taken as far as it will go. It would become mischievous if it blinded them to reality.

It is one thing to use a theory tentatively and "heuristicly," but quite fatal to turn it into a dogma and refuse to let the facts speak for themselves. Of such a nature is the principle that we have to treat the Bible to begin with like any other book. It is the argument of this lecture that beginning in this way we are led on to a deeper understanding of the Sacred Writings, which carries us beyond both the Fundamentalist and Modernist points of view, and which in the end will give us

the most adequate solution of the riddle of the world.

The first great characteristic of the Bible is its organic unity of theme. When we come to it as we would come to any other book, and examine it by the same critical methods as we would apply to other sacred books, we find, as I have said, that though it is bound in one volume, and is in two parts, Old and New, it is really seen to consist of two literatures, and that these contain a great variety of writings. Many of these are highly composite, nearly every one of them rises right out of human life, intensely experienced by the writers. They are deep-rooted in history, the history of more than a thousand years. They reflect, then, many stages of civilisation. They may be compared to the geological strata deposited by many ages of human experience, except that they are by no means dead rock containing dead fossils, but are full of vivid life and interest. We feel at first that this is only a book in the sense that they are all bound together. It is really a library of the literatures deposited by Hebrew history and by the appearing of Jesus Christ. But as we deeply familiarise ourselves with it, using every modern resource of scholarship and the utmost liberty of criticism, we become aware that there is something amiss with the new metaphor. Every good public library ought to contain books representing the most radically contradictory points of view even on the deepest matters. It ought to have room in it for religion and scepticism, the most secular and the most reverent and even the most superstitious types of mind. It ought to be

able to leave on the mind of the omnivorous and receptive reader the impression of utter confusion about most of the things that really matter, provided the reader be credulous enough to endeavour to take it all in ! The same thing is, of course, in a lesser degree true of a good private library. I should augur badly of the mental culture and development of any man in whose library I saw only books representing what I knew of his own point of view. I should think he had fallen into "dogmatic slumber" and was not facing "the labour and pain of the negative" in his own thought. Now the remarkable thing about this millenium or so of literature is that there is no such fundamental divergence of view throughout its entire course. There is, of course, development from one phase to another of faiths and thoughts about God and the world and the soul, but it is the development of one coherent faith the whole way through from beginning to end. No one who really makes himself at home in that literature can be left in any kind of mental chaos as to what it is all about. There is one clear tremendous theme of the Bible—the self-revelation of God. "God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son . . . by whom also he made the worlds." Ecclesiastes, with its melodious lamentations over the futility of human existence, is the only book that seems even to approach a divergence from this movement. Here the author is utterly unlike the rest of the writers of the Old and New Testaments who all believe intensely in life as well as in God. But the

book is really a dramatic presentation, in the person of Solomon, of the unsatisfactoriness of a worldly life, even when it has every gift of intellect, overflowing riches, and complete satisfaction of the senses. The "Preacher" is no sceptic or atheist, he is simply a worldly man who has found out that "the world is well enough in its way, but that it does not satisfy." But he has not wholly lost his faith in God. "This is the end of the matter; all hath been heard: fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man." It remains true, then, that the Bible has one central theme, and that we can classify it and arrange it all along the development of this theme, and that, therefore, the figure of a library breaks down on this impressive fact. What is it that makes the difference between a library and a book? Surely that lies in the unity of its fundamental view of things and of its theme of the latter.

So after having rejected the idea of the Bible being one book in the superficial sense of the term, we find the idea returning upon us again under the compulsion of a deeper understanding. But what are we to say of the author of such a book? Let it be remembered that none of the many writers whose works are contained in it had the least idea that he was taking part in its composition. This is as true of the four Evangelists and of the Apostle Paul as of the most obscure and forgotten writer of the narratives of the Hexateuch. Each of them wrote, as he thought, for his own day and land. Had he realised all he was doing it would have killed all the freedom and originality that was in him. He was, little as he knew it,

writing for all peoples and all times, and taking part in creating that impressive unity we call the Bible. That unity is not of a mechanical kind. It is rather like the unity of a great piece of music, in which a theme progresses from a first hint on to its full climax, a climax which has been prepared for all the way, but yet when it does come, comes with the surprise of a new creation, the emergent being grander than any one had anticipated. How are we to account for this extraordinary unity beneath the difference, which surely implies direction and control and intelligence? You cannot have the development of a theme without a thinker and a purpose. Can you have a purpose and thought without a heart? But what are we to make of a purpose which takes up into its development the great course of history? We could not have had the prophecies, for example, without the empires of the Euphrates which determined the Exile, nor the Return without Cyrus and the Persian Empire, nor could we have had the New Testament history without the Herods and Pilate and the Roman Empire and the Roman peace. Every one of these writings rises right out of the history behind it, grows out of the human soil and is conditioned at every point by its human environment. So much modern criticism has made abundantly plain. Therefore if there be really purpose and design in the Bible, it must be the purpose of One who controls the nations as well as One who inspires individual men.

This deep underlying unity of theme is, so far as my knowledge goes, unique in the panorama of living religions,¹ which modern scholarship sets

¹ The Koran is the only exception, but the Koran is the work of one man.

before us in the text-books of the science of religion. Unity is the last thing we can look for in the jungle of the nature religions. Take the sacred books of India, which form perhaps the nearest parallel. Indian thought, in spite of the long story of the development of the Vedantist philosophy from the Vedas to Brahmanism, is a confused medley of Pantheism, Atheism and Theism, and the popular worship of many gods. China and Japan have each a blend of nature-worship, Buddhism and the Confucian ethic. As I have said already, the Koran is really an offshoot of the Bible, "the kernel of Judaism," as Kuenen said, "transplanted to Arabian lands."

In this respect the Bible is unique, and the historian has the problem of accounting for that uniqueness. Quite obviously it grows out of the history. Inevitably, therefore, we are led to the history that lies behind the literature, and to the further, as it seems to me, inescapable inference that the history must be unique. There must have been something in the history out of which the unique literature came that was not in other histories. As we have seen, the new epoch of historical criticism of the Bible began when it was seen that the true method of dealing with it was not, as it were, to dictate to God as to what kind of book He had given us, but to come to it asking what kind of book He had actually given. In the pursuance of this inquiry it has, I think, been quite clearly shown that He has not given us a verbally inspired book. That is a negative conclusion. But for Christian scholars at least a positive conclusion has also been reached. It is impossible to

account for the Bible without believing in special historical revelation.

The change in point of view has been put epigrammatically by a great scholar: "The Bible is not so much the inspired record of history, as the record of an inspired history." In other words the inspiration or revelation is in the history, and only gets into the documents mediately through the history. The documents are subject to the ordinary limitations and errors of all documents, and have to be tested by historical criticism. But the history behind the manuscripts is a history of God's special revelation through Israel and through His Son.

Now is it conceivable to a modern mind that any one nation of the many in history should be set on a different plane, as it were, from other nations, and stand on a different level of privilege and responsibility from the rest? Why should it not? It would, of course, be morally incredible, if we thought of the selection of Israel as being due to some capricious preference of God, like that of an indulgent human parent for one of his children. But if the election of Israel were a vocation to service, then such election would be quite in keeping with all God's ways with men. All nations have their vocations from Him, and are privileged that they may fulfil their vocations. When God has a new truth to give to men He trains a prophet for it, and reveals Himself to him, always through hardship as well as through assurances of His love and help, that he may communicate that knowledge to others. It is quite in keeping with God's Fatherly love to all nations, therefore, that He

should appoint one nation above others to such a prophetic vocation. But if He took such action it could only be done by establishing personal relations with such a nation in a unique fashion. There is of course no doubt that Israel believed that it was a Chosen Race, chosen by the singular grace of God to be His prophet to mankind. But was this conviction true? If we are to treat the history of Israel as the ordinary modern historian treats the story of Greece or Rome or his own land, we shall simply regard this conviction as being of the same nature as each nation cherishes about itself, *i.e.* that it is the centre of the universe and that there is none like it elsewhere. It is a working convention of modern history that there is no supernatural or superhistorical intervention in the course of history. We have, however, seen good reason to believe that this can lay no claim to be anything but a good working principle. If we are in earnest with the endeavour to discuss what really happened it must not lead us to mutilate the facts. The historical student is in something of the same position here as were men of science when they had to decide whether the Newtonian theories or the theories of Einstein gave the truer account of the physical universe. The theory of Einstein, like that of Newton, gave a possible account of the facts as already known. There had to be a crucial experiment. New facts had, therefore, to be observed. Decision depended upon certain astronomical observations which required an expedition to South America for their execution. Now men of science might have settled down in their tradition, but they did nothing of the kind. The

expedition sailed, made the crucial observations, and returned with a new theory of the physical universe established. Not otherwise ought it to be with the endeavour to discover the truth about the history behind the Bible. In this case the question is: Have we here simply the same kind of events as in the histories of Greece and Rome and India and China, or was there interwoven with the history something different and unique? Have we simply the uniform web of historical events, or is there a new pattern woven in the web? When we are endeavouring to get at the real history behind the Bible are we dealing with a part of world history, fundamentally the same as we meet with everywhere else, or is there something specific and unique, a Gulf Stream of special divine action, setting through the wide grey Atlantic? There lies the fundamental issue. How can it be determined?

The evidence is cumulative, and could only be stated in its fulness by setting forth the whole teaching of the Bible about God and the world and the soul. Some endeavour to do this in outline will be found in the latter part of this book. But there is one crucial element in the whole problem, the personality of Jesus Christ. As we think of Him so shall we think of Revelation both in the Old Testament and in the New. For there is no question but that He is the climax of the long process of Divine Revelation and human discovery which we find recorded in the Bible. He is therefore, as it were, the crucial fact, the test of that view of Special Revelation which the underlying unity of the Bible has already brought before us.

Let us again, therefore, get the issue clear. If we can explain Him as simply the greatest of the human prophets, then like all the rest of us He stands on one side of the picture, with the mystery of the universe on the other. He is simply explaining the same old world as lay around Socrates and Confucius and Gautama. The only fundamental difference between Him and them lies in this, that He has a richer tradition than they had behind Him, and that He is a greater and better man, and has a deeper insight into the unchanging and silent universe, and, in consequence of that insight, a clearer understanding of the whole duty of man.

The other view is that while this goes some way to explain Him, inasmuch as He is the greatest of all the prophets, it fails altogether to bring out the vital fact that He cannot be explained from the human side alone, that in Him we have an actual new emergence of the Divine on the plane of history—in complete conformity with the earlier intervention in Israel, but far in advance of it in fulness and intimacy.

Here we have obviously two quite different views of the Christian revelation. The former tends to reduce all revelation to human insight or faith, human discovery of new depths in the same old world. The other view means that God Himself enriches His world by a new disclosure of Himself, and that we to-day do not live in the same old unchanging world of the sages and prophets of heathendom or even of Israel. We have something new, objectively given, which enables us to interpret the old material in a new way. We have, in a word, Special Revelation.

If this be true we may have, obviously, something of first-rate importance for our solution of the riddle of the world which may carry us incomparably further into the heart of things.

We have only to remember how far beyond the bareness and despair of the naturalistic interpretation of the world we were carried by our giving their due place to moral realities, to divine how profoundly important is this new issue.

On the one hand, all are agreed that to begin with Jesus of Nazareth was a man in the full sense of the word. The only question at the moment before us is whether He was more than a man, whether in some peculiar and unparalleled way God was in Him and with Him. We are not at the moment raising the questions of the Incarnation and the Trinity which the Church debated in the first three centuries of its existence. We are concerned with the protoplasm of Christian faith and experience, not with the vertebrate structure of the creeds which the protoplasm developed in the environment of the Roman and Hellenic world and in the struggle with the "heresy" of these centuries. Such questions cannot, surely, be ruled out in a world which has shown such unexpected developments in the long story of its creation. Supposing we could have been spectators of all time and existence, how many surprises we should have had. Who that saw the primordial fire-mist eddying in gigantic coils beneath him could have anticipated its results at last in land and river and sea? Who that saw these sterile continents and dead waters, could have forecast that out of them would come the green grass and the fragile beauty

of the flowers and all the amazing variety of life? Who that saw only the realm of the biologist could have foreseen that out of it would come man? Human thought to-day is obviously passing beyond the earlier conception that all this developing world can be explained as simply so much kaleidoscopic rearrangement of old materials. It recognises that, explain it as we may, new things are continually emerging out of the world. It is endeavouring to explain this element of novelty by combining such contradictory words as emergent evolution. We cannot say that in such a creative world there is no room in human history for some new emergence of the unexpected and creative and divine. The essential thing is to let the new facts make their own impression. It is an open question, then, whether we may not have the coming of Someone here who is more than Nature and more than man and his history as we know it elsewhere.

What are we to make of Jesus Christ? I shall have occasion to speak later on more fully of the substance of our Lord's revelation, and shall confine myself here mainly to that which convinces me that we have in Him that which transcends any mere human prophet of the same old world as that of which other prophets have spoken. Before doing this, however, I would guard against being taken to imply that anyone can be simply reasoned into Christian faith, or that a true picture of the Jesus of history can be got from any second-hand report. For that the inquirer must go to the sources themselves. All that can be done here is to indicate the salient points in summary form.

These are: His moral and religious standard,

His sinlessness, His self-testimony, and finally the impression He made on His disciples.

(1) That Jesus in His years of seclusion had pondered long and deeply as to what men and women ought to be, before He spoke the Sermon on the Mount, is clear, even though that Sermon as we have it may have been gathered out of His whole ministry by the Evangelist. The teaching has plainly grown out of the whole earlier life, and of its exacting purity, sincerity and beauty there can be no question. Its standards of magnanimity, forbearance and forgiveness, of moral purity in the conventional sense of the word, of complete disinterestedness, of veracity of speech and heart, of humility and courage and of love to the uttermost are expressed with incisive force. Nothing must stand in the way of their sovereignty, and His followers are to rejoice in persecution for their sake and the sake of that Kingdom which is their embodiment.

Even more wonderful than this ideal of moral conduct is His standard of how we ought to think of God and act towards Him. The teaching of Jesus about God stands quite solitary in human history. That teaching in substance is that God is the only Being worthy of our entire confidence and devotion, and that if men realised and acted upon that, Heaven would come to earth, and that He Himself had come to bring it, if man would take it. So He calls all His followers always to limitless trust in God His power, His love and His liberty to help men. They are to be perfect even as His heavenly Father is perfect.

To-day no normally sound man can stand in the

presence of standards like these without discovering the darkness and confusion of his own nature and being convicted of sin.

(2) Yet here is the remarkable thing: they did not convict Him of sin. Imperfection as compared with the perfection of God He confessed by His baptism at the hands of John, and by His own explicit statement: "None is good but God." It is part of the early Christian faith in His full humanity that "He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." But human finitude and imperfection is one thing, sin is quite another. Never once does He pray for forgiveness. Yet He tells His disciples to pray for it. "When ye pray say: Our Father . . . forgive us our debts." With all His love for man which surely springs from His faith in their spiritual nature, as deeper than their sin, He is unsparing in His judgment of the evil in every human heart. "From within, out of the heart of man, there proceed murders, thefts, adulteries." Freud and Adler never said anything more unsparing than that. Yet with so high and pure a standard and eyes so penetrating He moves through the whole story, untroubled by any sign of self-reproach or contrition or fear in the presence of the Holy God. It may be said that the absence of any sense of sin is not so wonderful. There are many people in the world who appear to be quite untroubled. "They are not worrying about their sins." That is, of course, true. It is not the mere absence of it that is the amazing thing here. It is the combination of it with what is admittedly the highest standard in the history of mankind.

It may be said that the Gospel records are so fragmentary that we cannot be sure that much is not omitted. But that is excluded by the quite undeniable fact that all His disciples believed in His absolute sinlessness. In the case of one great disciple, St Paul, it might be said, this faith in His sinlessness is not so wonderful, for whether St Paul ever saw Him or not, he certainly never lived with Him. But that the men who lived in the closest human intimacy with Him for three years should have been persuaded of His sinlessness is surely very astonishing. What it does seem to me to demonstrate is that in intercourse with them He never confessed sin to them, or prayed to God for forgiveness, or broke down in any way. His moral victory was to them complete. To them He was "the Holy One of God." This lies at the basis of that estimate of Him as "the Son of God" of which we shall speak presently. They could never have confessed Jesus as Lord had it not been for this belief in His sinlessness.

I dwell upon this unique characteristic of Jesus Christ, not because I think that sinlessness gives at all an adequate picture of the human Jesus. It is a negative, and gives no adequate idea of the fulness of spiritual energy and faith and hope and love that was in Him. But it is necessary to dwell upon it, as it is of itself enough to warn us off from thinking of Him as merely a prophet, and still more as a Hebrew prophet. For all these Hebrew prophets had far too keen a sense of sin in the presence of the Holy One to leave any doubt upon the minds of their hearers on this matter. Isaiah's vision in the Temple is typical of the entire succession of

Hebrew prophets: "Then said I, Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts! Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he touched my mouth with it and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away and thy sin purged." But we have now to consider that element in the self-testimony of Jesus which carries us far beyond the conception even of that unprecedented thing, a sinless man.

(3) The self-testimony of Jesus.

It has been tersely said by a great theologian and scholar of last generation, Ritschl, that the Old Testament is the Lexicon of the New. In order to understand the characteristic words of the New Covenant, we have to explore their origin and history in the literature of the Old Testament, and, one may add, in the modification it found in Judaism. With that Old Testament literature Jesus was evidently profoundly familiar, as He seems also to have been with the Law and with some of the Apocalypses or Visions of the Future current among devout readers of the time. Of this it is certain, no one knew the prophets so well. He knew thoroughly what a prophet was, what were his gifts, and what, also, were his limitations. Yet nothing can be clearer than that, though He had all the gifts of a prophet, He disclaimed the name. He said that He was the Messiah, the Christ. He would not even allow that John the Baptist was only a prophet. He said of him,

“What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A prophet. Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet.” He was the forerunner of Himself and the Kingdom He came to proclaim. He went farther still. He said that he that “was but little in the Kingdom of God was greater than John.” Yet the very eulogy of John from which these words are taken in which He says that among those born of women there is none greater than John shows that He admired John in a way that He admired none of His own disciples, however great His love for them may have been.

It is clear, therefore, that the “greatness” of which He speaks is greatness not of personal attainment, but of opportunity and possibility. The disciples belong to a new divine order, for they are the children of the Kingdom which He has begun, as the Messiah or Christ of God. These words, to begin with, break up the whole humanitarian interpretation of Him as simply the great prophet.

What did He mean by the term “Christ”? We are obviously thrown back on the faith of the Old Testament. By that faith, as we have seen, Israel believed that God in pure grace had taken it into peculiar and intimate relations with Himself, had promised that He would Himself make its fortunes His peculiar care, and in return had asked for its complete trust and obedience. He had in pursuance of this purpose given it a land, a law, kings, priests, a temple, sacrifice and prophets to interpret the implications of the covenant and explain His ways with them and the world as it moved around them.

But He had done more. Through these prophets He had given them a great hope, that He would send them a Deliverer and Saviour who should bring them definite and final salvation, and so "complete the history of the world." Historical criticism has shown us the different stages through which that hope passed in the Old Testament. In its earlier forms it does not transcend the limitations of a human deliverer, but later the figure of the Messiah becomes manifestly supernatural, and in the period between the Testaments and in the age of our Lord it had completely passed beyond the merely natural and human. But all the way through it has in it that meaning of definite and final salvation, and the full consummation of God's purpose not only with Israel but with the world.

Now it is quite clear that Jesus identified Himself with the long-hoped-for Messiah or Christ, and by this identification claimed to complete the history of the world in the sense that all history converged upon Him, and that by their relation to Him the future of all men and all nations would be determined. At a certain point in His ministry He said this quite plainly to His disciples.¹ Later on, by His entry into Jerusalem by an impressive symbol attached to one of the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament, He declared the same truth to the whole nation—and immediately afterwards uttered the great parable of the Last Judgment, in which He predicted that "all nations" would one day be gathered before His judgment-seat, when as "King" He would pronounce their acquittal or condemnation. He pictures both the

¹ Matt. xvi. 13-19. Mark viii. 27-29. Luke ix. 18-20.

guilty and the innocent nations appealing to Him, moreover, as their "Lord." The evidence for all these astounding claims is overwhelming. Harnack says that he "cannot concur" in the counter opinion. "Nay," he continues, "I think that it is only by wrenching what the Evangelists tell us off its hinges that the opinion can be maintained. To say nothing of anything else, such a story as that of Christ's entry into Jerusalem would have to be expunged if the theory is to be maintained that He did not consider Himself the promised Messiah, and, also, desire to be accepted as such. Moreover the forms in which Jesus confessed what He felt about His own consciousness and His vocation become quite incomprehensible unless they are taken as the outcome of the Messianic idea. Thirdly, the positive arguments which are advanced in support of the idea are either so very weak or else so highly questionable that we may remain quite sure that Jesus called Himself the Messiah."¹

What does the writer mean by the "forms in which Jesus expressed His own consciousness"? The reference doubtless is to the many other passages in the first three Gospels in which Jesus used language of superhuman authority. I would only cite one of these familiar to us all, which only needs to be deeply considered in order definitely to settle the motive of Christ's own conception of His supreme and permanent place in the spiritual life of mankind.

"All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son but the

¹ *What is Christianity?* pp. 133-34.

Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him. Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”¹

When we take all these three elements together, the religious and moral standards of Jesus, His own sinless consciousness and these judgments of His place and authority in the spiritual universe, and consider them, we can see the magnitude of the problem that they have on their hands who hold that they have nothing here but a human prophet. For there is no escaping from the plain fact that if this is true, then the prophet was a megalomaniac. We may palliate that disastrous conclusion by saying that the neurosis belonged to the period and land as much as to the patient, but that is, after all, only a palliation of an overweening self-estimate by one who was assuming the place of the Holiest of all to which He had no right whatever, and who has befooled the human race by leading it down the pathways of superstition and servitude to unreason. Is this credible? For my part I find it blankly incredible. It is precisely the same kind of distortion and denaturing of the reality of history that we have found elsewhere to result from the carrying through of the principles of Naturalism in the explanation of the Good and the Right and of Beauty and Truth. For though in this lecture we have been dealing, in the main,

¹ Matt. xi. 27-30.

with critics of the Gospels who share our own Theism, yet they have been using naturalistic theories of Nature and of history, none the less, in this resolute refusal to admit that we have here anything supernatural or superhistorical that may disturb the continuity of the whole. Once admit that narrow formula as determining our estimate of Jesus Christ, and in the end we inevitably come to what I believe is a manifest distortion of reality.

One fact alone could justify Jesus in speaking of Himself as He did, and that is that He spoke the very truth about Himself, and that He was indeed the Mediator, Saviour and Lord of mankind. If He was then it was His high vocation, His bounden duty to say such things, and with them to open a new door of life and freedom to all mankind. For if these things were true of Him, then He was revealing to mankind new things about God, of far greater moment and hope than any human being has ever told in the ages that came before Him, or the centuries that have passed since His time.

(4) I have left till now the last element which confirms this conclusion, the impression which Jesus made on His disciples.

It is quite obvious that after the disciples had recovered from the dismay of the Crucifixion they publicly confessed Jesus as the Christ. Indeed this was the corner stone of the Church. This confession made Him Lord and Judge as well as Leader. Emerson objected to the Churches of his day in New England that they "dwelt with noxious exaggeration on the Personality of Christ."

That there has sometimes been such one-sidedness in Christian life and worship, to the exclusion of the Father and the Spirit, I should not deny, but Emerson's protest was clearly against any breaking of the Humanitarian scheme. It is quite obvious, however, that the early Church broke it from the first. That it was intensely interested in the Personality of Jesus Christ from the very dawn of the Church is plain and is, indeed, not questioned. If the Humanitarian view of Him is right, then this was all a very grave mistake. They ought to have been thinking mainly of the Divine Father and of the new ethic of love, with due gratitude and love no doubt for the great human Teacher who had shown them such depths in the old world. But nothing can be clearer than that there is more, by a great deal, in their consciousness than that. Their conviction is not simply that they are seeing more deeply through Christ into the old world of Moses, David and Isaiah, but that something new has *happened*, which has changed the whole world. God has intervened in His Son and is intervening still by His Spirit. There is therefore a cosmic change—a "new æon"—a new environment of God breaking in. We may put the matter in an illustration. In our childhood many of us were familiar with what were called "magic-lantern entertainments," in which what were called "dissolving views" were flung upon a screen. First, there came a glorious display of some Alpine region with its world of snow and ice and mountain summit. Then, as we looked, the outline became dim and then confused, and then a new landscape of tropical forest came glimmering up through the

wintry desolation, and gradually submerged and overwhelmed the old.

Something like this, it is clear, was the common view of the first believers. They believed that a new world order had dawned with new and lovelier heavens overhead, and the old world that in that light was changing fast would one day disappear in the new splendour. New and creative powers were thrilling within them. A new æon¹ had broken in upon all mankind, and the supreme concern was for all to realise it and break out of the old æon of sin and death into the new world which Christ had begun by His resurrection from the dead and actualised at Pentecost. The vital element here is that God has intervened in Christ, and is intervening still by His Spirit. This explains the immeasurable importance of the Personality of Christ. To make Him only a man was to leave God remote as before. To believe that "God was in Christ" was to believe in a new and far richer envioning world, luminous with the Divine Presence, and stirring with new powers and new hopes. Christians were still, of course, living on the earth, but it was now one which God, after a new fashion, had entered and reinforced. That coming of the Divine had no doubt thrown much new light on the old world environment, but there had been a new divine event as well as a new human discovery in its light.

But who then was Christ? Everything, as between the two views, depends upon that. If He

¹ This conception of the two æons was current in the contemporary Jewish writings, and obviously played a part in the thought and teaching of St Paul. It is concealed from readers in the Authorised Version of the New Testament by the translation of the word "æon" as "world."

is only a prophet, then the matter though great is simple enough. But if He comes from the Divine, then there has been a cosmic change, and the promise of a new heaven and a new earth. Surely here we have the secret of that intense interest in the Personality of Christ which we discover in the New Testament writings, which speedily finds even the conception of the Messiah insufficient to explain Him, and cannot be satisfied until it reaches its climax in the Johannine saying "The Word was God."

But if this be true for us to-day, then it is clear that we have in the ocean of past history a gulf-stream of revelation and redemption. It becomes impossible for us to regard the history of Israel exactly in the same way as we regard the histories of all other peoples, or the Old Testament as being explicable on the same lines as the other sacred books of the East. If, as I have already said, the Bible is an organic unity, and at the crucial point we are convinced that the Supernatural and Transcendent is obviously present, then it becomes arbitrary to deny its presence throughout. For it is quite clear that the bonds which connect the history of Israel with the Christian origins are far too intimate and vital to allow us to regard the one as purely human and the other as Divine. It is true that to Christian eyes no history is purely secular or human. God was carrying His purpose out in Greece and Rome as well as in Israel. Each of these nations had its own divine vocation. But that spiritual truism must not be made the means of blinding us to the specific vocation of Israel alone among the ancient peoples of antiquity. Theirs on

any theistic interpretation of the world was that of central importance, to discover and reveal God and lead mankind on to communion with Him.

I see no reason, therefore, to question the validity of what we have seen to be the fundamental religious conviction of Israel that God had revealed His grace to them in a unique way, and that they stood to Him in a peculiar covenant relation, and had thereby a true knowledge of Him possessed by no other contemporary people. In other words, they were right in their common belief that they possessed a unique revelation of God.

It is clear, as I have said, that Jesus Christ believed this and invariably took it for granted, and said that He came not to destroy the old Covenant but to fulfil it. By this He plainly meant that that Covenant was meant to become something greater. It was meant to reach out and grow towards a consummation that would not annul it, but, conserving everything in it that was essential, would yet be far wider and deeper. On the very eve of His death He announced that New Covenant by instituting the Sacrament of the Last Supper. Even as the first Covenant was sealed by that sacrifice at Sinai, so this New Covenant would be sealed by His own death on the Cross. Whereas the first Covenant was with one nation only, the New Covenant was in God's intention with all mankind. Whereas, moreover, when the first Covenant was made the horizon of human hope did not extend beyond the grave, under the New Covenant humanity could trust in Almighty Love and Power for the life everlasting. And whereas under the Old Covenant the Spirit of God is only mentioned

as given to isolated individuals for great deeds and achievements of the Divine Kingdom, under the New in the Divine intention the Spirit of God is meant to dwell richly and always in all men and women. So, at least, the apostles interpreted their Master's words, and carried everywhere not simply a new teaching about the old world, but a message of the embodied grace of God to all mankind.

Now if all this be true, as I believe it to be true, we have in the literature of the Old and New Testaments the result and expression of this long process of revelation in history. The Bible is the product and the record of an inspired history. The inspiration was first of all in the history, and secondly and inevitably in the records.

This view of the Bible, I believe, alone accounts for all the facts, the strange blend of the human and the Divine in it, its astonishing unity and its proved necessity to the spiritual life of men. It seems to me to do justice to all that is true and important in both the modernist and the fundamentalist views of it while avoiding the violence of either. As the Old and New Testaments stand, the revelation which they contain has plainly been a gradual revelation culminating in a final climax.

But allowing to the full for this gradual development of revelation in the Old Testament, and admitting freely also that variety in presentation of the Gospel which we find in the New Testament, and which is recognised in all modern books on New Testament theology, it remains true that in the Bible there is one clear coherent view of God and the world and the soul of man. I believe that

only this interpretation of the universe really solves the fundamental problem which has been our main theme, and in the rest of this volume it will be my main endeavour to set forth the substance of this view.

It has been my endeavour in this lecture to show that we have valid grounds for believing that, as the Reformers said, the Bible "contains, presents and conveys" the Word of God, the Word of Revelation. I believe as they did, that that Word shines by its own light. It speaks home to every human being who has been loyal to the light that he has had, who has been able to distinguish between good and evil, and right and wrong, and had a true longing for God, and it authenticates itself as coming from Him. But it verifies itself by explaining the realities of human experience. If it comes from the true light of the world, it is reasonable to expect that it will dispel something of the darkness of the world, and bring sense and meaning into it, as well as into the soul of him who receives it. I shall now seek to show that the revelation thus given does actually grapple with and seek to solve that same riddle of the world, before which the knowledge of our time stands perplexed and dismayed, and further, incomplete as our knowledge, even so enhanced, may be, that we have here by far the deepest answer of all to the riddle of the world.

VIII

THE HEBREW SOLUTION

(I) THE CENTRAL FAITH

IN the last lecture we were concerned mainly with the possibility of Revelation and its nature. We have to deal now with the answer to the riddle of the world given us in the special revelation of the Old and New Testaments. The earlier part of this is given in the Old Testament literature. It is as if the Power which created Nature and history had given one people the master key to the great problem in the revelation of Himself in grace, and had said to them, "Work this out for mankind," and then when they had done their part of the human task for the race, had given the crowning revelation to all mankind.

The plan of these lectures does not give us time to consider the various stages in this process. That the revelation was gradual seems to me clear. Spiritual truth in the Old Testament as in the New is always given in relation to the needs at the moment of those to whom it is revealed. So is it in human education. No wise parent or teacher will try to give his pupil all he knows at once, but just as much as they are able to take in, and he will give it also in varying forms. Unless he is a very prosaic person he may even teach them in fairy tales or legends. Some of us may have memories

of how we learned things worth while from *Cinderella* and *Jack the Giant Killer*, and later on from martial ballads like "Kinmont Willie" or Macaulay's "Armada," things which the primers and manuals, more accurate though they might be in details, could not teach us nearly so well, and yet which it was vitally important that we should know. The graver books came in their due course. Even so was it with the Hebrews. The revelation was gradual and was relative to their practical needs, or as their prophets would have said, it was given to them by the Spirit of God to explain the providence of God.

We shall not here, however, trace the stages by which the Hebrews reached their conceptions of God and the world and the soul. It will be sufficient for our purpose to take these in their fullest development as they appear in their culminating form in the great Prophets, the Psalter and the Book of Job.

The centre of everything else is, of course, the conception of God. The peculiarity of the Bible among all the other ancient sacred books of mankind, is the way in which nearly the whole literature is suffused with the idea of God. No attempt is made to prove His existence, for nobody seems to doubt it. Nobody struggles, as we have to do to-day, "through nature up to nature's God." All the prophets, as has been truly said by a notable Old Testament scholar, "came down upon the world from God," and read its mysteries in that light from heaven. Had we asked them how they came by that certainty, they would all undoubtedly have said that God Himself had

revealed it to them. Thus they never seem to have had any struggle to win that fundamental faith, their whole labour and struggle is to hold and deepen it. Their problem is: Since God is as He has told us, why are the world and man such as we discern them to be? Why are Assyria and Babylon there, to threaten our life? and, later, Why if God rules, are we in captivity to these mightier but lower peoples? Why should the just man suffer and the wicked prosper in a just God's world? and so on. Hebrew thought, impelled by the challenge of the God-denying evil of the world, laboured to find a solution. Thus the theology of the Old Testament is to a very large extent Theodicy, the justification of the ways of God with men.

The vital centre of it all is its faith in God. How then did it conceive of God? In a general way we may say that there are three strands in this conception: the sovereignty of God, the righteousness and moral purity of God, and the grace of God.

(1) The conception of the power of God is common to all religions. It is the primitive and universal element. In spite of all the difficulties which belief in the omnipotence of God may entail on the believer, the great religions have never been willing to compromise on this point.¹ Man in his very marrow seems always to feel himself utterly dependent on supreme and transcendent powers, and they awaken in his mind that unique sense of awe without which there can be no religion. Hebrew prophecy is penetrated by this assurance of one Sovereign God who created, who sustains, and who

¹ *Elements of the Science of Religion* by Cornelius Tiele, vol. ii, p. 93.

governs all things. He transcends the universe, and He controls it. Everything is the instrument of His purpose. Rain, hail, storm and wind fulfil His word, and at His summons the great constellations fulfil their circuits. The huge Babylonian power is His unconscious instrument, His "battle-axe." He beckons to the waiting nations, and they come in their galleys over the midland sea, and in their armies from the great Euphrates valley. "Have not I brought up . . . the Philistines from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir?" He is the sole and transcendent Sovereign, and all other gods are phantoms. The root idea of transcendent sovereignty develops inevitably into the whole of what modern theology has called "the natural attributes of God," omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence and eternity. A blind or absent or inconstant, or merely immanent God, would be no true sovereign of the world.

The second great characteristic of the Hebrew faith is the assurance that this Absolute Sovereign is just and pure and good. Every human being by virtue of his personality possesses some conception of ultimate Power and Reality. He also possesses some conception of ideal goodness, by which he measures and grades himself and all other men. By the former he measures all existence, by the latter he judges all character. Now the supreme achievement of the Hebrew people, led by their spiritual leaders, the prophets, was to fuse these two conceptions in one. They reached the faith that the one tremendous Sovereign Reality who was over all things was identical with the

¹ Amos ix. 7.

Power which revealed itself in the tremulous but persistent moral ideal of justice, purity and goodness within them. No more momentous event has ever happened in the history of mankind. The only event comparable with it was the faith that the Word became flesh, and this could never have taken place without the other. Lotze has said somewhere that to their contemporary nations the Hebrews seemed like a race of madmen, but that to us, looking back to-day, they seem the one sober people in a world of drunkards. We know much about the gods and goddesses worshipped by the Phoenicians and Canaanite peoples, and about the gods of the Nile and Euphrates valleys, the Astartes and Molochs and Baals, Nergals and Thothis, monstrous creatures with the bodies of bulls and the heads of dogs or eagles, in whose honour children were thrown into the furnace, and women prostituted their virtue, and nations were ravaged, gods of the brothel and the shambles. Out of these drunkards' dreams the Hebrews awoke and went forth into the pure light and air of the morning, and, rejoicing in the world, sang their psalms of the one and only God. There is a group of these songs in the Psalter from the 91st to the 98th in which one can still catch the thrill of a great spiritual deliverance. In them the writers call all Nature to exult along with them. "Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; let the field exult, and all that is therein; then shall all the trees of the wood sing for joy . . . before the Lord, for he cometh to judge the earth with justice."¹ With that assurance that "righteousness

¹ Ps. xcvi. 11-13.

and justice" were the foundations of the visible universe went also delight in all the loveliness and greatness of Nature, and the sense that the whole created universe was a wonderful and glorious place: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare if thou hast understanding. . . . Whereupon were the foundations thereof fashioned, and who laid the corner stone thereof; when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"¹

No upright man or woman who believes that Nature is a cruel tyrant or "harlot" can rejoice in her beauty in that way. It is hard to discern beauty in that which evokes distrust and hate: admiration is inhibited by the disharmony. But convince such a man or woman of a glorious purpose of God moving through Nature and the inhibition disappears.

The uncompromising assertion of the purity and justice of the Sovereign God is a supreme achievement of Hebrew prophecy. In other religions, it is true, the gods are always, or almost always, regarded as the guardians of the tribal customs and their avengers when they are broken. But something much more than that is found in the ethical monotheism of the prophets. Their conceptions of justice, mercy and truth are something much more than tribal customs. They are pure and absolute, as valid for all the nations as for the Chosen People. Customary morality is only the protecting husk under which this pure morality can grow up, when justice, sincerity and kindness are loved for their own sakes, and not simply because the tribe

¹ Job xxxviii. 4-6.

approves them and its prosperity depends upon their practice.

The fusion between religious awe of the mightiest and ethical love of the best, had another far-reaching result. There can only be one highest, and He alone deserves man's worship and obedience. This faith made an end of polytheism. The world entered on a new phase of intellectual sanity and moral dignity and hope when ethical monotheism came into being. The pioneers in that advance were the Hebrew prophets, those rugged and sometimes desperate figures who arose in unflinching succession amid the collapse of their nation, and led its survivors back from Babylon to their ruined capital and the refounding of a nation that should gamble with its whole existence on the purity, justice and goodness of God Almighty. If challenged how they knew this conception of the moral character of God to be true, the invariable answer of the prophets would have been that God Himself had revealed it to them, and that it was the supreme glory of His people that God had spoken to them alone of all the nations of the earth. "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom; let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth, for in these things do I delight, saith the Lord."¹ The record of Israel's conflict is a great history, surpassing, I believe, even that of Salamis and Marathon in its meaning for the human race, and I cannot but think it should have a new appeal for men and women of our own time. For is it

¹ Jer. ix. 23-24.

not the basal fact of our spiritual existence to-day that men and women are awakening to what is the permanent human situation in the world if there is no God, and if we, and all that we hold most dear or sacred, are in the irresistible control of a power that is morally on a lower level than ourselves? It is true that we no longer worship Baal and Astarte and Moloch, but we are in the control of an ultimate power which not only has no mind or soul, such as we possess, but contains within itself those energies which the ancient peoples symbolised in these repellent forms. In truth these ancient Semitic religions were all plainly forms of Nature-worship, and if Nature be the absolute it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the whole Hebrew adventure was a mistake. That modern thought is realising the situation and is vehemently protesting against it, is a sign of hope.

The third great element in the Hebrew conception of God was that He was gracious.

The mere stark sovereignty of God, a power beyond either good or evil would, of course, have been no real gospel to mankind, though without it there could, equally, of course, have been no gospel. Nor, vitally important as was the moralising of the idea of God, could it alone have sustained the life of Israel, or created the magnificent literature of the Old Testament. Many people of the Protestant races to-day think that they have estimated all that is of permanent importance in the history of Israel when they say that it gave ethical monotheism a footing in the world, and that monotheism, purified by passing through the mind of Christ, is the conclusion of the whole matter,

the rest being ancient folk-lore and modern over-belief, like the worship of the Virgin and the saints. But this is to miss one of the vital elements, not only in the Hebrew but in the Christian faith, what is known throughout the Old Testament and the New as "the Grace of God."

I shall return to this subject later, in the closing lecture, and shall only refer briefly to it here. But it is as essential to the Hebrew conception of God as it is to the Christian that we should realise that every true Israelite believed that the God whom he worshipped was One who had taken, and was always taking, the initiative with him. He did not need to propitiate his God and win His favour. He believed that he had it already as his priceless birthright, as one of a people in covenant with Him. The sacrifices of the Old Testament Covenant were not meant to initiate such relations of love and faith. They were meant to restore them when they had been broken by his unfaithfulness. Now there is something here that no Theism can give us, which is derived by men's labour and thought from the facts of Nature and history, or the study of the moral consciousness, such as we have attempted in the earlier part of these lectures. It is the new element in the Bible which we who are Christians believe to have been given by Revelation. We have, even in the Old Testament religion, something much richer than "philosophical Theism," different not only in its conception of God, but of the communion with Him that is possible to sinful man. For real communion with God there is all the difference

in the world between the God who waits for me to find Him out and the God who comes seeking me, and when He has found me is ever drawing me on to new and deeper trust and love. Without this element the Old Testament is unintelligible. The lives revealed in the psalms and prophets all presuppose it, and out of it springs that Messianic Hope which was to mean so much not only for Israel, but for mankind. All alike have their deep roots in the sovereignty, the moral purity and the grace of God.

Such, then, was the treasure of Israel. We have now to see how the nation possessing that faith was called upon to face and pass through the most drastic experience of evil, evil which challenged its whole conception of God. How could such evils be if God were really sovereign? Why, if God were just, did such judgments fall, as they so often did, on the righteous rather than the guilty? If God were really in singular relations of grace with Israel why did Israel endure such things at the hands of the worshippers of false gods? These and many other questions gnawed at the very roots of the people's faith. Faith responded triumphantly to the challenge, and the Revelation grew. The thought of God became broader and deeper, and out of it sprang the whole of what is known as Old Testament Theology, its total view of God and the world and the soul of man, that broad general interpretation of the mystery of human destiny, which is the ground-work of Theism to-day, and also of Christian theology. It was, I believe, to begin with, Theodicy, the justification of the ways of God with men, an

interpretation of the mystery in full coherence with the fundamental faith in God.

In the development of that Theodicy in the desperate battle with calamity, certain great seminal convictions arose in the consciousness of the prophets and the devout in Israel, which I shall now proceed to describe. They are, I believe, the truths which, along with the fundamental faith in God, can alone give us to-day the elements of a solution of the riddle of the world.

IX

THE HEBREW SOLUTION

(2) THEODICY

I THINK I can best preface this lecture by giving at this point some brief account of an experience which has suggested the line of thought pursued in this and the following lectures.

During the spring and early summer of 1916 it was my privilege to work among soldiers in one of the great base camps in France. My special duty was to deal with difficulties of religious belief and practice, and in my private conversations and public discussions I got some knowledge as to where these difficulties mainly lay. The great subject of interest for thoughtful men was God and the War, and the ever returning question was, "How can we believe in Almighty God while a hell like this is going on?" Though they were not of the officer class as a rule, many of them were highly educated men. One man, I remember, a corporal in the R.A.M.C., told me had been a Member of Parliament, and afterwards he became a Cabinet Minister. Another has since become a distinguished artist. The level of intelligence was good, they showed not the slightest captiousness, and they were all desperately in earnest, as well they might be, for many of them were back for rest from the grim struggle in the Salient, and all over

Northern France the armies were moving to the Somme.

The speaker in these poignant hours with men who were plainly feeling after God, had to give a reason for the faith that was in him, and a ground for moral sanity and courage that would not give way beneath these men in the struggle that was before them. The experience led me to think all my old thoughts on the fundamental mystery of Evil over again, and I found that I had to state the whole Christian idea that we might get down to ultimate Reality together. In doing so I made a discovery for myself that I ought to have made before, that in dealing with this fundamental problem of Evil every one of the great interpreting principles or ideas I found myself using had its roots deep in the Old Testament revelation.

How had the Hebrews come by them? By the revelation of God, certainly, but under what circumstances and by what processes of thought? It became clear to me that the Hebrews had been just in our position, fighting for their faith and thinking out, in the presence of apparently overwhelming God-denying evil, how they must think not only of Almighty God, but of the world and the soul which He had created and which He governed. It is sometimes thought that only the Book of Job deals with this problem of evil, but this, I believe, is quite a mistake. Job deals only with a particular form of the problem, that of undeserved suffering. But in truth the whole circle of Hebrew thought is conditioned by the existence in the world that God has made of evils, both inward and outward, that seem to deny His existence. Certainly if any

nation had experienced the tragedy of evil in its full bitterness, it was Israel. What a story of human struggle and agony lies behind the Old Testament, of hard-bitten wanderings in the sterile desert, of captivities in Egypt and "the iron furnace of Babylon," of fierce civil war, of flaming cities, of battle and murder, and sudden death. "Look and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow," cries the unknown voice which wailed the dirge of Jerusalem fallen. Assuredly the discipline of Israel through the centuries was hard, as it clung grimly to its ridges of rocky upland, and few fertile valleys and cornlands, while the great military empires of the Nile and Euphrates valleys fought for sovereign dominion around them, or marched their armies against them.

Against all these overwhelming forces they had their one great ally, the Living God. Of Him prophet and psalmist were sure, and holding fast to that faith, and striving to hold their people fast to it, they were led on inevitably to deepen and broaden their whole conception of the God in whom they believed, and to interpret the formidable world around them in terms of that faith. The theology of the Old Testament is thus at the same time a Theodicy, a justification of the ways of God with men. That this passed through certain stages of development seems to me too plain to be denied. It is clear, for instance, that the grand monotheism of the later prophets, with its sweeping claim that the God of Israel is the one rightful Sovereign over all peoples, arose out of the conflict of Israel with the great would-be world empires of Assyria and Babylon. Yet though the

Old Testament view is "a growing revelation," and therefore passes through stages of development, it is one coherent interpretation of Nature and human life all the way. As I hope to show, it persists in the fuller New Testament revelation, and, as I believe, must be the ground-work of every adequate interpretation of the nature of human life to-day. What then is that Hebrew Theodicy of which I have spoken, and what has the full Christian revelation added to that solution ?

(1) First of all, and at the foundation of everything else, the Old Testament contains the enormously important assurance that there is some all-justifying permanent purpose being secured through the suffering and tragedy of human life. In this matter the religion of the Bible (for the New Testament here simply deepens and clarifies the Old) is alone among the religions of the ancient world with the single exception of Zoroastrianism, which also believes in a living God who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.¹ The Hebrews believed that through all the sins of their people and all the calamities that befell them, the sovereign God of holiness, righteousness and grace was working His purpose out, that one day history would culminate in the coming of His Kingdom, that "the earth would be full of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea," and that this culmination would justify all His ways with them. There was nothing like this in the context of the pagan religions of the time, and there is nothing like it outside "Christendom" to-day. There is one very

¹ The Zendavesta does not teach a fundamental dualism. Ahriman is not really the equal of Hormuzd.

singular feature of pagan religions generally. Whenever they think about the course of Nature and history, whenever they try to give an account of how the world came into being, and whither it is tending, they tend to divide its history into "ages," and to think of it as being a series of repetitions of these. This singular contrast between the faith of the Bible and practically all other faiths is so important, and yet so little realised, that it seems desirable to dwell for a little upon it.

We find this belief in peoples so widely separated in space and time as the Aztecs in America, the Babylonians in the Euphrates valley, the Buddhists and Brahmins in India and, in the fullest detail, among the Greeks and Romans of classical antiquity. The prevailing, and perhaps the universal idea, is that the earlier ages were better than the present. This is probably due to the belief that the world as it came fresh from the creative hands of the gods must have been better than the world of to-day. If we take the cosmogony of classical antiquity as typical of the literature on the subject, history began with the Golden Age of unclouded goodness and happiness. This was followed by the age of Silver, this again by an age of Brass or Bronze, and this again by an age of Iron, each age showing deterioration from that which preceded it, violence, greed and war destroying the happiness of mankind.

But would this process go on for ever? Ancient thought shrank from that dire possibility, and reached instead another conception of history. There would come a time when some great cosmic cataclysm would overwhelm the race of men, and out of the chaos a new Golden Age would arise to

be followed by a similar succession of ages, each inferior to its predecessors, leading on to another cataclysm and a new golden age and so on *ad infinitum*, like the turning of a vast wheel. Such is the underlying conception of history that finds expression sometimes in references to the Golden Age, and sometimes, in its fulness, in Greek literature from Hesiod downwards. In Roman literature we meet with it in Ovid, Virgil, Horace and many others. The philosophers took over the idea of endless circular recurrence of all things from the myths and the poems. "Plato and Aristotle believed that the material earth had existed from all eternity and would go on existing to all eternity, but that every human civilisation would sooner or later perish by some great natural catastrophe—flood or earthquake. After that the few survivors would hand on, in out-of-the-way places, fragments of the arts and the sciences of the civilisation, till later generations gradually built up a new civilisation to perish in its turn. The Epicureans taught that worlds were always being constituted by chance collisions of atoms. . . . Sooner or later each world was broken up again, and the same sort of thing would go on for ever. . . . The doctrine of eternal recurrence was formulated most forcibly by the Stoics, the most widely popular of all the schools. As against the Platonists and the Aristotelians the Stoics maintained that the present world was not eternal. The whole universe had been constituted by a condensation of part of the Divine Fire which was Reason and God. After a destined period it would all be reabsorbed again into the Divine Fire . . . and the Fire and God

remain alone for a period in solitary oneness and bliss. Then at the destined moment another world precisely like our world would be formed out of the Fire, run its course precisely like the course of ours and be reabsorbed. And so on for ever and ever.”¹

This is startlingly like the Vedantist view of Brahman, the absolute Being, and the sense world of Maya, illusion, with its ever recurring kalpas or cycles. If we may make a picture of a philosophy, Brahman is like a mighty peak round which eddy the mists of the phenomenal world. Brahman knows no change. He is beyond space and time. But the mist world has its sequences of ages or kalpas, each appearing and disappearing in its turn. This is the teaching of the standard Indian philosophy, the Vedanta. One of its most authoritative modern exponents, Deussen, expresses the matter thus: “While by creation we understand something done once for all, and therefore at a given time, the consciousness of the Vedanta is dominated by the concept that from Eternity to Eternity the world periodically re-emerges from and again returns to Brahman, *i.e.* emerges and returns times without number: the future world periods are measureless.”

The Vedanta is the philosophy of Hinduism, but the same idea of endless recurrence haunts

¹ Edwyn Bevan, *The Hope of a World to Come*, Essex Hall Lecture, pp. 28-29. This is an admirable summary statement of the contrast between the cyclical and linear views of history. Other references, *Hasting's Dictionary of Religion and Ethics*; Ages of the World article; specially Söderblom on Zoroastrian ideas and Söderblom's Gifford Lectures, *The Living God*; also Baron von Hügel, *Essays*, Second Series, pp. 30-31.

the thought of Buddhism as well. In spite of Gautama's discouragement of all speculation the brooding Eastern mind has not been content to confine itself to just so much knowledge of the great universe as bears directly on the attainment of the blessed life, but has framed systems of thought to explain the course of nature and human history. These, too, are haunted by the thought of endless recurrence, the turning of the great wheel of phenomenal existence. All the schools of Buddhist thought, Northern and Southern, are agreed that "there is no beginning of Samsara or Transmigration, and will be no end to it." The causally related field of sense desires, and phenomenal illusion from which the Buddha came to deliver men by the extinction of desire, sweeps on interminably into the Unknown. Men

do not know

How long untired, unspent, that giant stream shall
flow.

In this ever-flowing stream, moving on in cycles of gradual deterioration and renovation, souls appear in endless successions and transmigrations. From some indefinite higher region Buddhas appear to show to hapless human spirits how to escape from that endless tide. What ultimately becomes of these Buddhas and those who follow them is left in the mist of the unknown. At last they enter Nirvana. What Nirvana is we cannot tell with any confidence, but the preponderance of opinion is that it means in effect, annihilation or absorption. Certainly the logic of the system leads to that view, but the final end is left in a golden haze. About the stream of phenomenal illusion there is no doubt.

It goes on interminably and meaninglessly. No purpose animates it or directs it, no reason illuminates it. It is a mere *datum*, deliverance from which is man's chief good.

Sects have arisen in modern Northern Buddhism, in China and Japan, possibly under Christian influence, perhaps from a revolt of the human heart and intelligence, which have not only transformed Nirvana into a "Western Paradise" and Buddha into a kind of limited divinity, but have sometimes even anticipated a cosmic salvation. But the logic of the system and the historical teaching of its Founder are against them. To him there is never ascribed the origin, or any control of that vast and gloomy ocean of phenomenal being amid which, as it were, drowning souls appear in their many transmigrations, through unending cycles of change. Such control as Buddha and the Bodhisattvas have exerted is not over the phenomenal ocean, it is purely over those whom they instruct how to escape from it.

There is something very remarkable in this agreement of ancient pagan thought as to the cyclical or circular nature of the course of history. The primitive religions have no conception of history or even of Nature as a whole, and so we cannot expect them to contribute anything of importance to the subject, but wherever religions and civilisations reach a certain point of development they seem almost inevitably to fall into this cyclical description, this cheerless and paralysing conception of the great universe. It means that there is no significance or purpose in it, nothing produced by all the striving, nothing taught by all

the suffering, nothing won by all the praying, that the gods or the Necessity which is over gods and men, deem worthy of preservation. Nor can the utmost striving of the hero or the statesman or prophet prevent the fatal ebbing of the tide. In opposition to this cyclical view is the distinctive view of the New Testament and also of the Old, with their conception of God, their fundamental belief that the world of Nature and of human life is realising a purpose wholly worthy of Him, and that those who give their lives to Him have the universe at their back. The symbol of all pagan views of Nature and of history, it has been truly said, is the circle, the symbol of all truly Christian ways is the line. The figure, it may be granted, needs some modification, the line is not straight but spiral, but in its broad effect it is, I believe, true, and I shall accept the term, the linear theory of history.

There is no doubt whatever that this is the view not only of the New Testament, but of the Old. It is, indeed, the distinctive view of the Bible, wherein it differs from practically every pagan faith, ancient or modern. Here we have the secret of the quenchless vitality of the Bible. It believes in God, and because it believes in Him it believes that the world of Nature and of human life is realising a purpose wholly worthy of Him, and that they who give their lives to Him for that end have the universe at their back.

This faith pervades the Old Testament. The whole literature is instinct with divine purpose and therefore points forward. From the call of Abraham onwards Israel is represented as knowing

itself to be a people of destiny, created to realise a divine end. "In thee (Abraham) shall all the families of the earth be blessed." "What we call 'Messianic' views necessarily belonged, in a certain sense, to the very essence of this religion." There is thus a latent universalism in the faith of Israel, even in its earliest stages. "Since the God of heaven and earth is the covenant God of Israel, the people cannot but be confident that its God and its salvation must be everywhere victorious and be revealed before the world as *the* God and *the* salvation."¹ Out of this fundamental faith there springs up, under the challenge of present and impending evil, the Messianic Hope. The God in whom Israel believes is no mere "spectator of time and existence," no mere Absolute, emitting and engulfing world after world, but the creative Father, who is making something that will be worth all the anguish and the tears. With that faith Israel could never contemplate anything but final victory and definite salvation. Yet it knew that such victory was beyond its powers to win. It had too just a measure of its own powers and of the evil which opposed it, to have any such belief. But this dire certainty drove it farther into the sanctuary of its faith, and it won there the assurance that God Himself would send His deliverance by sending Him who would bring definite and final salvation and complete the history of the world.

What we see then is not the endless turning of a kaleidoscope, in which the old patterns sooner or later return. Something new is being *created*, something is being achieved. Moreover there is a

¹ Schultz, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. ii, p. 334.

nearer and a farther horizon. God's Kingdom, the Messianic reign, will be accomplished on earth. But beyond the world of space and time, already in the later prophetic writings and in the psalms, there opens a farther and wider horizon. Later Hebrew and Jewish thought is no longer content with the primitive imagery of a world in which all the righteous shall live to be a hundred years old in peace and felicity and triumph, and the "lion eat grass like the ox, and the child lay its hand on the cockatrice's den." The great conception of immortality looms up and becomes ever more prominent as Israel enters a pass through the long gloomy defile of Judaism, and prophecy is supplanted by Law and Apocalypse, during the period between the Testaments. With the advent of the Gospel and the rise of the Christian Church, the long winter breaks up. All the trumpets of the spring are sounding in the New Testament. The religion of faith and hope and love has come at last to men, God Himself has come to His people. The æon of His new creation has come in, and His spirit is visibly at work creating that new order. I believe that we entirely miss the meaning of early Christianity if we miss the fact that it is an optimism, that as Edward Caird once said, "Jesus Christ was the greatest optimist that ever lived."

The optimism of the New Testament is one, however, that takes the fullest account of the facts of human sin and of the human tragedy of circumstance which reaches its culmination in death. At the very heart of the Gospel there is the Cross, which is the disclosure of the dark depths of sin and of death in its most agonising and ignominious

form. There is here, therefore, a continual reminder of the reality of the sin and misery of mankind. But it is all, as it were, contained in something greater, the grace of Almighty God. The first aspect of the Cross leads to pessimism. When we see deeper, it is the symbol of boundless optimism, for through it we see to the heights of the love of Him who is the Sovereign, Creator and Lord. This insight is what gives to all the greater apostolic writings their unique power of invigorating the spirit of man. Such was the love of the Creator and Sovereign! It cannot but be that He will triumph at the last, that He will fully realise His purpose, for is He not sovereign? So the whole linear conception of history which we find in the Old Testament is taken up into the New, but it is greatly deepened and widened.

That there are pessimistic versions of Christianity current in the world to-day we have seen. These are not confined to those parts of continental Europe which have suffered most in the war, where we might have expected them, but we find them in our own country as well. Dean Inge, for instance, holds that we have no ground for thinking that the course of history is leading on to some universal blessed consummation. Christianity is for the spiritually minded few, who are able by their insight to pierce through the evil and inherit eternal life. For the rest, if I understand him rightly, there is little but the old cyclical great year going on apparently interminably, without any real and lasting progress. How is this pessimistic view of history derived from the New Testament? It is got, I think, by the simple excision of the whole

Advent element from the teaching of our Lord, as part of the Jewish inheritance of Christianity which does not belong to its real essence. That this is critically untenable has long, I think, been conclusively shown. It is clear that our Lord predicted His own return in glory and in power, and that the great majority, if not the whole, of the early Church had that expectation. The New Testament outlook is certainly, therefore, upon the victory of God's Kingdom in the world of space and time, as well as upon the vaster background of eternity. That is what makes the simple dropping of the Advent teaching as Jewish survival so dangerous. It means a subtle but drastic change in the whole New Testament outlook on the earthly future, for assuredly we shall go into it expecting defeat rather than victory, and we shall look out upon nature and history with very different eyes if we think of all their vast processes as converging at last upon collapse rather than transfiguration. We shall inevitably lapse back into the pagan conception of cycles, rather than the linear conception of the Bible.

It is not my purpose here to enumerate the many factors, human and divine, in the spread of early Christianity in the exhausted Græco-Roman world. I wish to single out one of these which is fundamental, and which, I think, until recently has never been adequately realised. It is difficult for us to-day to realise that the world into which Christianity came was one without faith that the world had any purpose or meaning at all, for that is what, as we have seen, the cyclical view of Nature and history implies. This dreary concep-

tion was common not only to the dying polytheisms of Greece and Rome, with their gorgeous temples and ritual, but, as has been said, the philosophic schools as well. In the cyclical view of history human striving for the good of one's kind means in the long run nothing at all. The one thing a man can do is to keep his own soul brave and clean and unbroken by evil fortune. Stoicism was the natural creed of the finer spirits in the pagan world of the early Roman Empire, and it had no finer example than Marcus Aurelius. Yet who that has read his writings has not discerned the note of weariness in them, the weariness not only of a man, but of a dying age, whose gods had grown old and passed away, and whose philosophy lacked the great quality of hope, and could only construe the universe in terms of endless recurrence? The teaching of the Stoics could brace men up to maintain their own uprightness and superiority to fortune. But fortune itself was absolutely indifferent to them, did not care whether they lived or died or rose or sank in the scale of moral being. It was a great wheel intent only on accomplishing the revolutions of its great year. Into this dreary world of thought came "the new race," believing that the world meant something, that "it meant intensely and meant good." It believed that God was working His purpose out, and the true life for man was not the self-centred life, even though it was intent on its own moral perfection, but the life that threw all its energies into the divine purpose, and became a "fellow-worker with God." To the older view a man's life made little difference to the great year. "All the windy ways of men are as dust

that rises up and is lightly laid again." But to each Christian his life was a great thing, something that he had to live once for all, and that could never be repeated. For him to move in a circle meant death, to move in the line of God's purpose, life everlasting. By his faithfulness or infidelity the Lord's victory might be hastened or delayed. Inspired by such faith "the new race" threw itself into the battle with an unconquerable courage that more than made up for its poverty in numbers.

Rickert¹ believes that it was this quality of zeal and joy in living and suffering that above all else secured the final victory to the early Church. The man who believes that the universe has a purpose and meaning, and that his own life can fulfil that purpose, is certainly worth infinitely more as a soldier of a cause, than the man who is always thinking of his own perfection. However that may be, certain it is that a great and kindling faith has a wonderful power of attraction. The finest and bravest spirits gravitate to it by a kind of spiritual affinity. God's new truth attracts those who in this measure have beforehand been followers of His Spirit. There is little doubt that thus in time the older faiths and philosophies became so weakened by the loss of their finest witnesses that it only needed the Act of Constantine to bring the whole mighty fabric of Paganism to the ground, and so the cyclical conception of history gave way to that of the Bible, which for many centuries in one form or another held the foreground of Western civilisation. Wherever that

¹ Quoted by Baron von Hügel in *Essays and Addresses*, second series, pp. 30-31.

conception has prevailed, men have been convinced that there was a deep and wonderful meaning in human life, and a purpose in the immense Nature environment, that all things and men, "the stars in their courses, the seas in their flowing," all the myriad processes and events in human life, were convergent to an all-justifying end, a result so great and good that it would be worth while even for God Himself to keep it in being for ever and ever. There has been, and still is, divergence of mind among Christians as to the narrower eschatology, as to whether or no God's Kingdom will triumph in the world of time. There is no doubt, never has been any, as to its larger eschatology, its triumph in eternity. Thus to all Christian thought there is *meaning* in all things. History is not mere recurrence, its course is once and for all, and man plays his part in it, not as an actor in a drama who may have the same part to play a thousand times, but as a warrior in a decisive battle which must be finally won or irremediably lost. For many centuries this view of life held the field in Western civilisation. But in our day the older pagan view has returned in modern forms, in which, instead of the transcendent and sovereign Creator, we have Nature as the Absolute and science as its sole interpreter. Inasmuch as science takes no account of anything but facts and events, and has stripped these of values, except as subjective creations of man's own mind, it cannot tell us anything of a creative purpose or any cosmic end, and so it is left to a pure inference from the facts and events of Nature to discover if there is progress and meaning in the world at all.

I would not under-estimate the contribution which science, by the theory of evolution, has made to those who believe in the linear view of history. But this, taken alone, is plainly insufficient to sustain that view. For a considerable time men thought that it was, and even to-day we get the social Utopianism of Karl Marx and the more sanguine of the Humanists, combined with a philosophic Naturalism that is really quite incongruous with it. For if we believe, as the second law of thermodynamics teaches, that the energy of the universe is in continual process of "degradation," like a clock running down, and that human history can only terminate in a final age of ice and perpetual night, and if we believe that the only real universe is that of space-time energy patterns, then everlasting life, personal and racial, is a mere dream created by the "wishful thinking" of man. In that vaster frame of the physical universe, biological evolution shrinks to a mere episode. The final word is Death and not Life. All Life and Love and Beauty and Goodness "burn to the same white ash at last."

The growing realisation of all this, accentuated by the great disillusionment of the war, has shaken to its foundations the whole idea of indefinite "progress" as the law of history, which played so great a part in the nineteenth century. Mr Bury has written the story of that idea in an admirable monograph. He has traced it to the rationalism of the eighteenth century, the revolutionary optimism of the French Revolution, and the opening of the age of science with the new sense of control over the powers of Nature which came with it.

That something of its early exhilaration still remains we can see from some of the Humanist writers. The fanatical optimism of Russian Communism is a close parallel with the optimism of the Age of Reason. In both cases the existing absolute monarchies had become an incubus on the growing life of their countries, and with their disappearance men breathed more freely and hoped and believed in the future and an earthly paradise to be won by man, in the earlier case through the principle of liberty, and in the latter through collectivism and the machine. But in spite of these survivals the prevailing temper of our age is far more sombre. It has lost faith in indefinite progress. It has a secret feeling in its heart of the iron ruthlessness of the final order of Nature, and the cyclical conception of the great year which, as we have seen, was universal in the old classical Paganism seems to be coming back again in the new.

Nietzsche gave it shrill expression in not a few of his writings. For some obscure reason he seems to have thought what other ages, who were very familiar with it have found to be an intolerably tedious and depressing conception of life, a veritable gospel. An acute critic¹ thinks that in his passionate defence of the "eternal recurrence" the motive was a yearning to retain the last remnant of the old metaphysical belief in immortality.

Spengler, in his sombre book, *The Decline of the West*, has an analogous conception of the course of history. To him the whole linear conception

¹ Mügge, *Nietzsche : His Life and Work*, p. 312.

of history as a process realising absolute values of Truth, Beauty and Goodness is obsolete. It is a provincialism of Western civilisation. There are really no absolute ideals discoverable by us and valid for all peoples. Each civilisation has its own. We have to study each civilisation "morphologically," as a whole, and when we do so, we find that each has its day, its morning, evening and night. They are all under destiny which has so decreed, and none can escape its inevitable fate. Here we have simply a variant of the cyclical conception, supported by a formidable wealth of erudition.

Certainly the old conception of indefinite evolutionary linear progress of the Victorian Age, which is still too lightly taken for granted by some of the Humanist writers, seems to have gone for good. Even Herbert Spencer, the prophet of evolutionary philosophy of that period, at the close of his book on *First Principles*, where he has been tracing the vast scope of the evolutionary laws through the whole range of Nature and history, winds up his survey by admitting that, in the end, our whole solar system is on its way to universal dissolution, but finds consolation in the thought that somewhere else in the universe the story of evolution will be taken up anew. This, too, in its turn will run down like a clock, but somewhere else will start again "alternate eras of evolution and dissolution." And then there is suggested the conception of a past, during which there have been successive evolutions analogous to that which is going on, and a future during which successive other evolutions may go on—ever the same in

principle, but never the same in concrete result. Here we have, it is clear, yet another version of the ancient idea. It would appear, therefore, that the issue between a cyclical and a linear conception of history is still a live issue. The chapter of the rise of modern science has made no real difference in that essential matter as to whether the natural universe has a meaning and a purpose, or whether its whole life is best symbolised by the mechanical motion of a revolving wheel. It is worth dwelling as we have done on this dreary but persistent theory, if only to throw into relief the alternative view, that which is persistently maintained throughout the whole of the Bible, the view that we are living in the heart of a great creative process, which is making that which will be worthy of eternal life worth keeping for ever, when the scaffolding shall be taken down and the building revealed.

Here, I think, is one of the central issues in the Christian Apologia to-day. It is at least the fundamental issue that arises between the Christian and the man who says that he finds it impossible to believe in God because there is so much pain and tragedy in the world. Cost there certainly is, but the first question to ask is whether the result is worth the cost. If the course of history is cyclical, "the mere drift of cosmic weather, doing and undoing without end," then pain and sorrow and death are gratuitous, and we cannot call the unknown source of all things good. But if the result is of lasting beauty and eternal worth, the whole process is transformed. It becomes a means to an end. To the outward eye a surgeon at work

may seem a torturer and butcher. When we understand what he is doing we may admire and reverence him. Is such a transformation possible in our view of the enormities of Nature? We are under too great disadvantage in answering this question. We are living in the very heart of an unfinished process. That is true even of Nature herself. She is still in process of evolution, and bears a very different aspect to-day from what she did in the æons of pre-history. To us, as a matter of fact, she appears much more friendly than she did to our forefathers. Still more is this true of human history. It is quite clear that if there be any meaning in the universe it must be found not in the earlier stages of the immense process, but in the later, not in Nature but in history. But there is no indication that we are anywhere near the end of that process. We may indeed be only in its earlier stages. The scaffolding is up, the general structure of Nature is definitely marked, but it may be that in the history we know, we are as yet looking only at the lower courses of the masonry that will one day be a temple. We are living in an unfinished world, and so cannot adequately estimate either the scaffolding or the building, unless indeed the architect has taken us into his confidence, and in some measure given us to see the future building as he sees it. Further, besides the difficulty of our understanding an unfinished world there is the further difficulty of the limitations of our own natures. Do we fully understand our fellow-men, or even ourselves? In part this is due to our own finitude, and in part to our own moral failure. We are both unde-

veloped and morally warped, and it would plainly be unreasonable for us to expect intellectual completeness while our own intellectual and moral powers are so imperfect. In fact, any solution of the riddle of the world that had no gaps and difficulties in it would be gravely prejudiced by that fact. We have to keep both these cautions in our minds as we pursue our inquiries.

What, then, is the Christian solution?

We have, first of all, the undeniable fact that Nature with all her ambiguities has produced man. Out of Nature has come humanity, and the real question now before us in this lecture is as to whether man is worth all the labour and suffering, all the blood and fire and tears which have gone to his making.

When men like Mr Lippmann and Mr Huxley impeach the universe and say that it is impossible that a world which is so cruel and unjust to man can have a just and loving source, we must remind them that man owes his very existence to this austere discipline. They judge Nature by certain ideals and standards. They say the world is often unjust and cruel, therefore it cannot have had a just creator and sovereign. If man is not worth it, then the cosmos is an irrational and unmoral place for all its uniformity and order. But if he is worth it, then there must be something unreasonable in all these clamorous impeachments of the cruelty and unreason of the natural order.

The worth and sacredness of man is vital to any reasoned Theism. On the other hand, it will, I believe, be impossible permanently to maintain

that worth and sacredness of man in a world without God.

The Nature environment, if it could speak, might say, "You say I am blind, unreasonable, unjust and cruel. Yet see what I have made by these methods which you find so blundering and ruthless. I have made Man. I have sculptured his body, his heart and his brain, without which he would have been a helpless disembodied spirit. Without me he could not have rejoiced in colour and sound or fragrance or been able to give his joy expression. By my hardness to him I have driven him into society, and all that wealth of love and loyalty in family, fatherland, city and state, which society implies. Take my apparent cruelty and indifference away, and how would he have learned courage and fidelity and endurance? How could he have learned to think, to love, to dare, and to achieve? How could he have been a man? Yes, I have been hard to him, I have made him subject to death. But without death would he ever have awakened to that vaster environment toward possession of which I have been schooling and leading him? Without death would he have learned faith?" Nature, could she speak, could say much in her defence. Without the schooling of Nature man could never have had those moral standards by virtue of which he judges and condemns her. The situation is far more complex than the accusers allow.

We see some lovely flower, and we pluck it and individualise it and think how wonderful it is that so fragile a thing should have fought so good a fight against the environment of frost and rain and

storm and stubborn soil. But the whole environment has gone to the making of the flower, it is the stuff of which the flower is made. It has persuaded and dared the flower to lay hold of it and struggle with it, and win from it its magical beauty and fragrance. The flower, as it were, has plucked its secret from the environment, that which the environment desired to be, but could not be. To explain that single flower you need not only summer sunshine, but winter nights, not only calm, but storm, not only the brown earth around its roots, but every sun and moon and star. To know it through and through you would need, as the poet said, "to know what God and man is."

Now what is true of the flower is in a much more striking degree true of man. Man is more than Nature. He is a spiritual being. That our whole argument has been directed to show. But actual concrete man as we know him to-day is to a very large extent also the product of the Nature environment which, through all the ages of history and pre-history, has fostered and fondled and persuaded, but has also intimidated and beaten and hammered him into shape. For

Life is not an idle ore
But iron dug from central gloom,
And heated hot with burning fears,
And dipped in baths of hissing tears,
And battered with the shocks of doom
To shape and use.

Take any one or all of the great virtues: sincerity, patience, courage, justice, love and faith. As we

realise what each of those means does there not rise up before us the environment which brought it to the historic birth, as man struggled with it for dear life and called to his aid his brothers and his God?

Let us draw our argument at this point to a conclusion. Through the whole mystery of human suffering and sorrow and death God through Nature is *making* something. He is not simply like an artist or poet creating a cosmic work of art. He is creating human spirits for real communion and co-operation with Himself and with each other. The world is thus an unfinished world, and we are here to aid in its completion. A large part of the evil in the world is therefore of our own making, or is due to our own inaction. "The world" said John Keats, giving, though he did not know it, classical expression to the ancient Hebrew faith, and to what we have called the linear view of history, "is not a vale of tears, it is a place of soul-making." The Hebrew solution, however, is wider than that. It thinks not of a multitude of independent souls, but of a triumphant humanity, a household, a family, a kingdom of God. There is not a glimmer of this possibility in either of the two statements by Lippmann or Huxley quoted in an earlier lecture. There is simply the assumption that if there be an almighty and loving God He must desire to see all His creatures happy, and since great numbers of them are not happy, there cannot be a loving God. What made John Keats object to the world being called a vale of tears? It was certainly not because he was blind to the sorrow of human life. How deeply he felt the

pathos of mortal transience his letters and poems show :

And when I feel, fair Creature of an hour !
That I shall never look upon thee more,
Never have relish in the faery power
Of unreflective love—then on the shore
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
Till Love and Fame to nothingness do sink.

But he felt, too, that it was keying the real meaning of the universe too low, that it was a weak and lachrymose way of looking at human life and love and death. The world was a much greater place than the term "vale of tears" implies, and a place much better worth living in, calling for heroism and achievement and love even if for suffering and sorrow. Something great was afoot! It was a place of soul-making. We, too, surely feel that there is something great and fine about Keats' saying. We approve it as against the lachrymose view. Why? Because we feel that Keats thought nobly of the human spirit, that that is how we too ought to feel about it, that, in fact, it is the ultimate truth about the soul of man. But if it is the truth about the soul of man we ought also to think nobly of the great natural environment which has produced the soul, and in which its goodness can grow. It cannot be so dark a place as lachrymose and impatient people think it to be. How if, with all its pathos and tragedy, it is the only kind of world that can produce heroic human souls, the faith that can move mountains, the love that never faileth, the hope that maketh not ashamed? How if the kind of world that Lippmann and Huxley want could only at the best produce men and

women of a lower type? I think that John Keats at least would have said that he preferred the "soul-making" kind of world to the world without tears of the Humanist desire.

Before we begin to impeach the cruelty of the Nature environment and the God who made it, surely the first question to ask is this: Is the product worth while? What are we to make of humanity? There is much in the story of mankind to make us sorrowful, much to tempt us, too, to hatred and contempt as well as to pity. Yet who does not feel that there is much that is very splendid, something of a quality far above that of Nature and of boundless possibility for yet higher things? Humanism, surely, of all creeds, preaching, as it does, the service of man as the highest of all kinds of being, were it not obsessed by its naturalistic prejudices should feel this. Say what you will of Nature, it remains true of her that out of her stern discipline there has come man.

(2) But, it may be said that this view of the world-process implies limitations of the Divine Power. Mr Lippmann urges the old dilemma that either we must deny the power or the love of God, implying that in either case He ceases to be God. But it seems to me that in defining God's omnipotence we must distinguish clearly between the idea of a God limited in power by some other power outside Himself, and if I may put it with intentional crudity, as old as Himself, and a God who is self-limited. The former is a really limited God, whether the limit is set by other gods or by an eternal matter. The latter is really omnipotent. Now the Biblical conception of the world

starts from the faith that it was created by God. I cannot conceive of an omnipotent God who is unable to create new things. Surely this is the very highest reach of omnipotence, of mere power. Yet if the things which He creates are in truth real beings, and to deny their reality is to deny creation, He must take account of them. Reality, as we have seen, has been defined as "that of which we must take account." So real beings are beings of which even God must take account. So long as He does not annihilate them He must recognise them, and allow for the nature with which He has endowed them. That is self-limitation. It seems to me to follow inevitably from creation, whether that which is created is "material substance" or energy, or any living thing, or a human personality. Even as regards material substance creation seems to carry with it this self-limitation by the Creator. The more definite and determinate any created thing is the more does this become plain. But of these grades of being, human personality is unquestionably the highest. It is that of which God Himself must take the fullest account, the sphere in which God at once expresses Himself in His creative power most fully, and limits Himself the most. Here, in the very heart of the Divine Omnipotence, we have the ground of human freedom, freedom of the lower order, freedom of choice between good and evil. It has been truly said that it is a lesser act of Divine Power to make things than it is to make things that can make themselves.

To follow another line of thought, it is the Christian faith that God is Love. But Love is always essentially creative. The artist loves beauty,

and that love leads him to create beautiful things, whether they are painted on canvas or sculptured or built in stone, or woven in the more flexible and subtle medium of sound. Human beings of different sexes love each other and desire to create their like, and the family comes into being. Friends love each other, and out of that love of friendship spring the motives to help each other to fuller life and greater personality. Out of the love of the Fatherland comes the desire to make it nobler and greater yet. All pure love desires fuller life and love. Love is thus essentially the creator and guardian of life and love. Christian faith finds in the Divine Love the motive of all creation. The older forms of theology expressed this motive by saying that God created all things for His own glory, but inasmuch as the essential nature of God is Love this is only a somewhat misleading and repellent way of saying the same thing. But if Love is the motive of all creation, the climax of the creative process must be the creation of human beings who can enter into the mind of God, become "fellow-workers with Him" and love Him again and so become worthier of His love. The possibility of this, according to the Hebrew tradition, is grounded in this, that He has created man "in His own likeness." Paradoxical as it may seem, it is none the less true that in this finest of God's creative works, that into which He has put most of Himself, He has most decisively limited Himself. We can conceive of Him creating absolutely determinate spirits who could not err or sin, and of His infinite love going out to them. But can His Fatherly approval of them go out to them

in quite the same measure as to a free human spirit who, able to err and to sin, has yet overcome? Supposing mankind in the end to achieve such a victory, would there not be something greater there than spirits which, though faultless, had never been free? Thus in making free human spirits there is a deep purpose of the Creator. He may be on His way to making something greater than a world of spirits who have never been free.

(3) But clearly such freedom implies the possibility of sin, and it is part of the same Biblical interpretation of life that men have universally "missed the mark" and sinned. This is one of the great structural conceptions both of the Old Testament and the New, an essential part of the solution of the problem of Evil which is given in the Bible. There are really only two ways of dealing with the problem of moral evil in God's world. Either it is part of the very structure of the universe, in which case we are in constant peril of minimising moral evil by reducing it to man's finitude, rather than his fault, and thus of compromising the moral character of the Creator; or else of tracing moral evil to man's misuse of his freedom. The Hebrew mind in its most characteristic form, the testimony of the prophets, seems to me quite clear in its broad outlines. There are passages here and there in the Old Testament as in the New where prophet or apostle, dwelling on the greatness of God and the universality of His sovereign power, uses expressions which, if literally and logically treated, might seem to imply that evil itself was due to the Divine fiat, but they are comparatively few, and are best explained by the

psychological law that when men see any one thing white hot they are for the time incapable of seeing anything else. But the overwhelming mass of evidence in the Old Testament, as in the New, throws the whole responsibility for the sin of mankind upon mankind itself, which is accused of having, of its own motion, or prompted by temptation from the infernal world, departed from the way of the living God. This is, indeed, one of the universal and permanent elements in the prophetic writings and is echoed in the Psalms, which reveal in the most intimate way the very soul of Israel. This deep sense of sin is part of the very substance of the Hebrew literature. It cannot be minimised or ignored without radical transformation of the whole ethos of the people. It is an essential part of that Hebrew Apologia of which I have spoken. The central shrine of the faith was the moral purity and perfection of the Lord God Omnipotent, and Israel never could have maintained that in the face of the world unless it had been convinced that the dire moral condition of mankind was due not to the will of God but the sin of man.

The case is not otherwise to-day. The tendency of modern thought is to throw the main responsibility for moral evil upon Nature, and to look upon man as victim rather than sinner. The inevitable result is seen in the depersonalising of the Sovereign and the consequent loss of all faith in the moral order of the universe. Instead of the Living God, Creator and Sovereign of the universe, just, pure, merciful and loving, we have that Nature against which fierce impeachments are hurled, and which

can only be defended on the supposition that it is unconscious as well as unmoral. Moreover, since moral evil becomes entrenched in the very substance of the world, the nerve of moral courage in the war against it is cut. Many are to-day, or it would be truer to say were yesterday, protesting against the Christian teaching about sin as if it were unduly gloomy and pessimistic. But in truth it is a far more hopeful reading of life and the universe than either Naturalism or Pantheism, for all doctrines of sin imply that it is against the fundamental order of the universe. It is an intrusion or disturbance, not part of the essential nature of things. Therefore it may be overthrown and cast out. The difference between the older and the modern view is like the difference between a disease and a congenital deformity. The former may be overcome, the latter never, until the cosmos is cleansed or passes away.

It is sometimes said that the Christian doctrine of sin depends upon the Fall story and the opening chapters of the Book of Genesis, and that as the historicity of this has been undermined by criticism the whole doctrinal fabric of Christianity has been undermined. I should rather say that if we really believe in an almighty, transcendent and good Creator of the universe, and if we hold to the fundamental moral belief that we ought to be just and pure and humane, while we know that we are not, we are bound to think of sin as an intrusion in God's world, as the Hebrews believed it to be. How the lapse came about we may not know. But the story of the Fall did not create the sense of sin. Rather did the sense of sin create the

story. It is a myth, no doubt, a symbolic and imaginative presentment of reality. But it is an inspired myth, a poetical and imaginative presentment of an event or a historical series of events, which resulted from man's abuse of his inheritance of freedom far back in the mists and morning of history. Every serious student of history knows that there have been periods of decadence in the higher life of man, even within the brief illuminated zone that we call history. But we can hardly hold that there has been fall within history, and refuse to allow its possibility within the far longer period of human pre-history. That there are obscurities and difficulties left in the whole region of the historical origin of sin we are not concerned to deny, but that they do not inhere in the story of the Fall, but in the plain facts of the moral situation, seems to me clear.

It is certainly an essential part both of the Hebrew and the Christian Apologia and solution of the riddle of the world, that all the moral tragedies of human life are due not to the Divine Creator and Sovereign of the world, but to the wrong-doing of man himself. "God is not the author of sin." That is fundamental, even in that classical document of Calvinism, the Westminster Confession of Faith!

But it may be said that even on the fullest Christian view of man's freedom and of sin as a human aberration from the divine order, God is the source of man's freedom, and as sin is in the world solely because of man's freedom, therefore He is, in the last resort, the author of man's sin. One would hesitate to consider such an argument

as being anything but a man of straw. But as Mr Huxley actually finds the Great War a reason for disbelieving in God, we must consider the point. We may, I think however, dismiss it with an *argumentum ad hominem*. All human fathers and mothers are responsible for bringing children into the world. Are they therefore to be debited for all the evil deeds their children do, or are they to be credited with all their virtues ?

X

THE HEBREW SOLUTION

THEODICY (*continued*)

WE have considered two of the constructive ideas of the Hebrew Apologia, the Divine Purpose and End and man's freedom and sin. What, in the light of their knowledge of God, did the Hebrews make of that bitter cup of outward evil of which they had to drink so deeply, in their experience of foreign conquest and captivity, as well as in those ordinary sufferings and sorrows to which all mankind is exposed? We have seen how they explained Sin. How did they explain Evil? ¹

(4) There is no attempt, of course, to give any philosophic account of it. The Old Testament writers nearly always deal with concrete situations and with particular evils past, present or future. Thus the prophets are mainly concerned with the Assyrian and Babylonian dangers, and with the ultimate disaster of the Captivity, not with such generalisations as we find in the impeachments of the universe which I have cited in the opening part of this book. The main, if not the only attempt to give some general explanation of why there is so much suffering, and why, above all, there is death in a world created and ruled by

¹ I use the word in this chapter in the sense of outward as distinct from inward, or moral, evil.

God, is found in the Fall history, which Bishop Gore has described as "an inspired myth." This is, at least, as much an endeavour to show why suffering, toil and death, as well as why sin, came into the world. The essential point is that it links up sin and death, and contains the promise that one day both will be overcome.

Certainly the Hebrew mind at its highest never accepted the Stoic attitude of the higher Paganism, that the manifold evils of human existence were eternally and unconditionally decreed for mankind, and that all that man could do in presence of ineluctable fate was to keep his own spirit erect, or pass unsubdued from the world by the "open door" of suicide. The prophets, who are the true spokesmen of Israel, invariably treat the calamities that crowded so thick and fast upon their people as sorrows which, if Israel had done rightly, need never have been, which were, therefore, not God's ideal will for them, but which since they had sinned they must undergo, in order that they might repent and turn to Him again. They were, in a word, the righteous judgments of God. But there was grace behind the judgment, and always breaking through the gloom, there is the Messianic Hope. The evils which the prophets have to face, are to them not unconditionally fixed and fated. They are one and all disciplining and contingent evils, God teaching men by the consequences of their own actions.

The two conceptions with which we began, the linear interpretation of history, and the conception of sin as the abuse of man's freedom, are thus fused with the conception of outward evil and

calamity as contingent and disciplinary in the Hebrew prophets, and the ways of the almighty, just and gracious God are thereby justified to men.

Such in outline is the scheme of thought which we find in the prophets, and were it necessary for our purpose, it could be shown to underlie also the Psalms and the historical writings, and also, with certain modifications, the wisdom literature of the Old Testament as well. Beneath its infinite variety of form there is this substantial unity of view throughout the whole, springing from its view of God.

I shall briefly sketch the leading Old Testament ideas on the subject, and shall then inquire as to how far these Old Testament truths help us to deal with the riddle of the world to-day.

The whole period during which Hebrew thought on the problem of suffering and evil reached its climax, was one of profound emotional tension, and the thinking is what modern philosophy calls "existential," in the highest degree, vivid, intuitional, illuminated as by lightning flashes. Three great figures, above all, stand out from the rest to give us the full Hebrew thought on the sufferings of Israel, one of them an obscure herdsman, and the other two utterly unknown to this day by name, but known everywhere where men can think and feel at all, the authors of the Book of Job and the second Isaiah.

(a) The Book of Amos, says a notable scholar,¹ "is the most wonderful phenomenon in the history of the human spirit." He appears out of an obscure life as a "herdsman" in a land, as he

¹ Cornill, *The Prophets of Israel*.

believes, ripe for judgment, and pronounces its impending doom. There have been many cranks and fanatics who have done the same since then, without anything out of the way happening, or any result following in the change of men's thought. But in the case of Amos the prophecies came true, and he initiated changes in the fundamental ideas of mankind that were radical and that are living still. We are not concerned here with the personality of Amos, however, but with the message of his book. It was addressed to a people who through a period of peace and prosperity had become slack and rotten in their morality, and who, because they kept up a punctilious observance of outward ritual, believed that God was on their side, and that their prosperity was a proof of divine favour. To this people Amos utters his terrific prophecy of coming judgment, basing it on their cruelty to the poor, their avarice and drunkenness and violence. Their claims to special favour from God because of His covenant with them are a delusion. Their privileged position darkens their guilt. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities." What are these coming punishments? Their overthrow in war, the sack and burning of their palaces, hunger in city and country, pestilence and wholesale slaughter by the sword. What gave the prophet his certainty that these things were coming upon his people? His knowledge of the moral enormities that were going on around him, and his assurance that Almighty God was just. The greater part of the book is about the sins of Israel and the coming judgments of God

upon them for having broken the Covenant, which enjoined justice, mercy and purity between men and women, rich and poor. As they have had the greater privileges, so will the doom of the chosen race be the greater. But Amos begins his prophecy by predicting a like doom to the surrounding nations: on Damascus for its cruel oppression of Gilead; on Philistia and Edom for their inhuman slave raiding; on Ammon for its outrages on women and children; on Moab for its savage desecration of the body of the King of Edom. Such inhumanities are hateful to God and cry aloud for His judgments. Now there can be no doubt whatever that this conception of doom and requital runs through practically the whole of Hebrew prophecy. It is an essential part of the prophets' conception of history, which is that moral wickedness, sooner or later, calls down divine judgment upon men, or, to use Pauline language, that sin works death.

We shall reserve meantime the question of how far this conception is taken up into the Christian revelation, and further, the question how far it is believable to-day. We are at the moment concerned simply with the mind of the Old Testament. True or false, this was certainly the prevailing way in which Israel accounted for its own national sufferings, and it was largely because of this interpretation that it was enabled to keep its faith in God through the terrible ordeal through which it was to pass in the "iron furnace" of Babylon. Had it not been for this interpretation, in all probability the whole religion would have been dissolved, there would have been no "remnant" and no return from Babylon, and Israel would

have to-day been a half-forgotten Semitic tribe, engulfed, like so many of the contemporary peoples, by the Euphrates empires. If, instead of facing the moral realities of the situation and calling their people to repentance and faith, the prophets had impeached the universe for its cruelties to its helpless victim, man, there would never have been any return from the Exile, and the whole later history of redemption could never have been. There would have been no nation to whom the Son of God could have come.

For it is clear that without the fundamental conception that sin within works sorrow, suffering and death in the world without, there could never have been the Messianic Hope. The whole motive of this hope is that the Messiah or Christ that is to be will deliver His people not only from sin, but from suffering and oppression, and give them life and happiness and freedom. Without this belief, moreover, the whole later development of apocalyptic thought would become meaningless. For the very nerve of that apocalyptic thought is that God will judge the world and save His people from the doom that will fall upon the Gentiles and the unbelieving in Israel. How radically the abandonment of this belief would alter the whole world of Christian theology it is unnecessary to show. Indeed we cannot dispense with this fundamental conception of sin and its penalty without making meaningless a large part of the thought of both the Old Testament and the New. It is one of the structural ideas not only of the prophetic conception of history, but of the whole Bible. I do not believe that we can dispense with it without disaster to

the whole Christian solution of the riddle of the world.

(b) But we may hold this and yet recognise that the Hebrew mind sometimes misapplies its principle and presses it beyond due limits. We may marvel sometimes at the rashness with which some of the prophets predicted specific judgments upon individual and national sinners against the laws of God, or the *naïveté* with which the chronicler ascribes the disasters and prosperities of Israel and Judah to the ritual orthodoxy of their monarchs.

We can do this with the greater freedom inasmuch as we find within the Old Testament itself so tremendous a protest against misapprehension of the principle as we find it in the Book of Job. This wonderful book was written by an unknown writer at least two hundred years after Amos came forth from the mountains to prophecy doom upon Israel. By general agreement it is the greatest work of literature in the Old Testament, and its thought is as noble as its form. "There is nothing like it either in the Bible or outside it," said a notable New Testament scholar, Professor Bruce, "nothing so thorough, so searching or so bold." "I call it," said Thomas Carlyle, "apart from all theories about it, one of the grandest things ever written with pen. . . . It is our first oldest statement of the never-ending problem—man's destiny and God's way with him here on this earth. . . . Sublime sorrow, sublime reconciliation; oldest choral melody in the heart of mankind—so soft and great; as the summer midnight, or the world with its seas and stars." Superficial readers of the Old Testament often

think of this book as being the only book in the Hebrew literature to deal with that problem of the sufferings of mankind which is so troubling the deeper thought of our own time. In truth, as we have seen, it forms only one element in a much richer solution. Others, again, think of it as a mere rebellious protest against what is assumed to be the outworn view of the Old Testament in general, that earthly prosperity attends the righteous, and present and future doom the wicked. Strangest of all is the endeavour to class the unknown author as one of the great sceptics of Israel. Mr Lippmann here falls into the quite inexcusable blunder of saying that Job, finding the problem of undeserved suffering inexplicable, falls back in the end on the idea of "an impersonal" God. This is a mere travesty, surprising in a critic usually so well informed. The book is really one of profound faith, faith that believes though it cannot understand. Unless Job had believed that his wild protests had done injustice to God, why should he have "abased himself and repented in dust and ashes"? The book is directed not against the fundamental prophetic view of Amos and the prophets, who, be it observed, always speak of the nation, of its sins and their penalties, but against a quite illegitimate wholesale transference of that conception to the lives of individual men and women. This in Job's time seems to have been the conventional orthodox view, against whose cruel injustice Job raises his impassioned protest, reproaching those well-meaning "friends" who come to him in his grief and ruin, and "speak falsely on behalf of God." They add new injuries

to his already overwhelming sorrows, by assuming that one so afflicted must be a greater sinner than his neighbours, and by seeking to bring him to repentance in order that God may restore his fortunes.

It is probable that the ordeal of the Captivity, and the tragic fortunes of some of the noblest of Israel's leaders had deeply stirred the thought of many among the exiles, of whom the unknown author was one. His book is an example of the seriousness with which the Hebrews took the whole problem before us. It deals with only one phase of the problem, the sufferings of the righteous, and the challenge which these sufferings give to faith in God. "Job," it should be noted, does not really question the broad prophetic view, but the book unquestionably shows that the writer did not think that it completely solved the problem. Certainly the attempt to apply it in its rigour to the case of every individual sufferer awakens his passionate indignation, and it may be granted that his book made an end for good of all pious "falsehood for God." It cleared the ground by its apparent blasphemies, and so prepared the way for something deeper. But the strange and arresting thing is that the book has no clear positive answer of its own. It is true that the prologue explains the sufferings of Job as meant to give him an opportunity to display his faith and rectitude, that the Elihu speeches give as explanation the purifying effect of suffering, and that in the epilogue we see Job's fortune and home restored to him again. But it is very uncertain if these speeches belong to the original book, and it is possible that

the prologue and epilogue are an older framework on which the writer wrote his poem. In any case we do not feel that the author is nearly so deeply interested in them as in the great survey of the glorious universe which is given by the Almighty to Job in the climax of the book. To the superficial reader this panorama of the Nature world may seem an oddly irrelevant consideration. What has the glory of Nature to do with the hard lot of the righteous, we may ask. Do we not find to-day that Nature is the mystery? We forget that to Job everything in Nature was, beyond question, the work of God, and the vastness of Nature made him feel how great must be the depth of the Divine Wisdom, and how little he knew compared with the all-knowing Creator. How little he really knew! How much there was to know! How easily fuller knowledge might show God, in spite of all that seemed unjust, to be incomparably juster and kinder than Job could know. I cannot but think, too, that the author meant to show us and to depict Job as feeling, how amazingly beautiful and glorious the Nature world was, and to suggest to us how reassuring that beauty and sublimity are. They are a continual witness to us that something worth while is afoot in the vast processes of the visible world. In any case the real intuition of the book is seen in its climax, Job's humble confession that he has been rash and foolish in his judgments of God, and that he abhors himself for his blindness. We have here surely an implied assertion of faith in the perfect beauty and goodness of Almighty God. Job's main contribution to the solution of the problem is thus

twofold. The book clears a false theory out of the road, and so opens the way for a true solution. And it not only clears the way, but by its own grandeur makes us feel the vastness and mystery of the universe, and the need for humility and patience and faith in our quest for a solution. They who have learned the real lesson of the Book of Job will be careful how they rashly impeach the universe, or how they with like rashness put forth too facile defences of God. They will be sure that a solution, when it does come, will be worthy of the majesty and beauty of that great prologue to human history which we find in Nature, and pending such a solution they will believe and wait.

(c) The third great figure who comes forward with his prophetic message on the standard Hebrew problem is the unknown prophet usually known as the second Isaiah. Scholars differ as to the date of Job, and as to whether he came before or after the second Isaiah. Most of them believe that the two books date from about the same period. Certainly they both have had the same problem before them, the sufferings of the righteous. One can easily see why this should have been so in the days which followed the terrible disaster of the Captivity. The prophetic interpretation of this was, as we have seen, that it was the judgment of God on the unfaithfulness of His people, and that it could be restored by their repentance and return to Him. But by the second Isaiah, as by Job, that view is found insufficient to explain why the righteous should suffer as well as the guilty nation.

(5) Here the unknown prophet gives expression to a new idea or principle of faith which seems never

to have crossed the mind of Job, the principle of vicarious suffering. The righteous suffer not only in consequence of the sins of others, but for the sake of others. We have here a thought so profound that it is difficult for me to believe that the author of the Book of Job could have missed it, had the second Isaiah been earlier than he. It seems simpler to believe that the unknown prophet came later, and that in large measure he answered the question to which Job had been able to give no clear reply himself, the question of why, under the government of a righteous and gracious God, the innocent should suffer as well as the guilty.

The Book of the second Isaiah, like Job, is a magnificent work of imagination, but it is something more. It is a call to action and it made great history. It was meant to summon Judah to return from Babylon, and recover its fatherland and historic mission as the covenanted people. To this end much of the prophecy is directed to awakening the exiled people to the glory and sovereignty of its God, before whom all opposing might is as nothing. The prophet then seeks to reawaken his people to a sense of their vocation as the servants of this glorious and sovereign Lord, and passes on to the famous passage where the Servant appears as a Sufferer, despised and rejected of men, and then revealed to those who thus scorn him as suffering for their sakes and bearing the burden of their sins. We are then shown him as emerging triumphant from deepest disaster, and so the prophecy moves on to its climax in the victory of God's people and the thronging of all nations to worship Israel's God.

Into the many difficult questions raised by this noble prophecy it is unnecessary here to enter. We are only concerned with one point, the assertion of the vicarious law as a principle essential to understanding of God's ways with men.

"The fact of vicarious suffering was brought home to the mind of the prophet by what he observed in the spiritual history of his time. In the calamity of the Exile the greatest sufferers were necessarily those most loyal to Jehovah, and there may have been individuals who might be considered innocent whose tragic and inexplicable fate caused the greatest perplexity to believers in the justice of God. The problem of retribution was in the air, and was kept alive by facts like these. It may therefore be supposed that the prophet, with all this before him, was led further to perceive that the suffering of the righteous for the guilty is a divinely appointed law of the spiritual life, that it is a soteriological principle, and that this principle is so essentially bound up with the vocation of Israel that the divine purpose of salvation could only be effected by its operation. If this were his thought it was natural that it should find expression in his conception of the Servant of Jehovah, who embodies all that is of religious significance in the true idea of Israel."

Why, however, should we go back into that old world of Hebrew thought for an explanation of life as we have to experience it to-day? We do not so return because of any untenable theory of the equal authority of the Old Testament and the New. We, who through Jesus Christ believe in God,

¹ Skinner, *Commentary on Isaiah*, vol. ii, Appendix Note 1, p. 236.

have a fuller revelation of Him than had the Hebrews, and we are free in that fuller light to reinterpret that view of God and the world and the soul which we find in the Psalms and in the Prophets. But when, in that freedom, we deeply consider to-day the riddle of the world, and how, as believers in an Almighty God of absolute purity and goodness, we shall explain that riddle, we find that we cannot, in substance, dispense with any of these great constructive principles of Old Testament thought, that here we have, as it were, the ground-work of Theism. We must widen and deepen these conceptions in the light of the fuller knowledge of God and man which Christ has given, and of the new knowledge which we have of Nature and of history, but the essential framework will remain the same. We have already seen the relevance to our problem of the Old Testament conception of the Kingdom of God, of creation and of sin as the break in the divine order, caused by man's abuse of his freedom. We have now to consider the Old Testament conception of external evil as the divine judgment and discipline of man's sin. Is this true and relevant to the solution of the riddle of the world to-day?

It is nowhere stated in the Old Testament that sin is the cause of all the suffering in the world, and there are, according to one of the greatest authorities on Old Testament thought, two theories as to the presence of death in the world, one, the more deeply religious interpretation, ascribing its presence to the sin of man, and another taking it as something natural and due to the fleshly nature of man. But there is no doubt, as has been said, that

all through the Old Testament there runs the persistent conviction that all the greater calamities and sorrows of Israel are due to its sin, that sin is the way that leads to privation and sorrow and death, and that righteousness is the way of life. What we have to consider is the question as to whether this is true, or whether it is false. If it is true it must be of very great importance for the solution of the riddle of the world, for it would at once remove a large part of the ills of human life from the necessary, to the contingent and educative, element in human experience.

If we will take any of those impeachments of Nature which have been quoted at the beginning of this volume and examine them anew we shall find that in every one of them man is regarded as the victim of the world system, which unconditionally subjects him to many miseries of body and mind. Mr Julian Huxley, for example, in his account of the enormities of Nature which make it impossible for him to believe in God, after enumerating some of the miseries wrought by natural catastrophe: earthquake, pestilence, hereditary defect, and so on, pitches upon the war as the crowning example of all these God-denying elements in experience. It is not too much to say that if Amos were living to-day he would find in the war a proof that God existed. For he would say that if nations chose to live as they had for long been living, self-centred, greedy, jealous and tyrannous, then the war, sooner or later, was bound to come. The fundamental difference between Mr Huxley and the prophet Amos is that the one looks on man as a victim, and that the other looks

on him as a sinner. This compels the one to look upon God as unmoral and impersonal, while the other looks on Him as holy, just and good. Yet, with curious inconsequence, on the very next page Mr Huxley, though he is eager to show that his own view of Nature is impersonal, allows man to hope for deliverance from war if he will only be willing to learn the lessons of experience, and passes right over to the other point of view. "War itself," he says, "is not necessarily inevitable. The European War was inevitable when it came because of the fact that human intelligence, goodwill and virtue in 1914, and for all of history before it, were incomplete and insufficient." That is, of course, perfectly true. In substance it is Amos's case against Israel and its neighbouring nations, though he would have put his indictment more forcibly than to say of Tyre and Edom and Ammon and Israel that they were "incomplete and insufficient in intelligence, knowledge and virtue."

But if this second passage be true, it will not do to say that man is merely a victim, and to throw the whole responsibility of the war upon God, and then, in order to escape from the horror of supposing a Creator of the world so cruel, to depersonalise and un-moralise Him into a Nature Absolute. It is not possible to have it both ways. Either the war was inevitable or it was not. If it were, I admit that Mr Huxley's argument is sound. If it were not (and be it noted that Mr Huxley's whole book is directed towards an endeavour to rouse men to struggle against such evils as war), then man is a sinner, and war the consequence of his sins. In that case we are within sight, at least, of the prophetic

view of history which holds that God is teaching man, by His providence, the ways of justice, mercy and truth. He is educating him, in a word, by the consequences of his own actions. The war was not inevitable, it was contingent on man's sinfulness, and its anguish was meant to awaken man to the abominations of violence, greed and pride which brought it upon him. Is this language too strong to describe the pre-war mind of Europe?

I will cite here a description of modern diplomacy from a writer whose judgment carries unusual weight. In a pamphlet written during the war in defence of Viscount Grey, Professor Gilbert Murray thus describes the atmosphere of modern diplomacy. The passage is too long to quote in detail, but I do not think I am misrepresenting it by the following quotations: "There is something sordid and even odious about the ordinary processes of Foreign Policy. There is a constant suspicion of intrigue, a constant assertion of 'interests,' a dangerous familiarity with thoughts of force or fraud, and a habit of saying silken phrases as a cover for very brutal facts." In home politics it is different. There are common interests and a common law and standard which underlie the conflict of home politics, so that, in ideal at least, all can work together as a band of friends. "But Foreign Politics are the relations between so many bands of outlaws." These outlaws are not criminals who have been outlawed, they are working in a region where no law is recognised but that of force. Therefore they are all afraid of each other. "There is fear in the air, and it is fear that makes men lie." "Fraternity, public right and common sense, the problem is how

to practise them or even remember them, when one enters this market-place of chaffering outlaws, each with a knife in the belt."

Be it remembered that this description applies to the region commonly known as "Christendom," in which for nineteen centuries the Christian conception of God has been taught. It is clear that it has not been allowed to leaven the world of international relationships, otherwise men would have realised that insincerity, robbery and violence were as hateful to Him when practised by nations against each other, as when practised against one's fellow-men. The nations were in fact, in their relations with each other, living as if there were no God. There can be no kind of doubt as to what the prophetic dealing with the problem of Evil would have been so far as the war is concerned. They would have said: "There is no problem, the real mystery would have been if such sin had not worked out death."

It is surely of enormous practical importance to-day whether this view or the other is true. If God or Nature, by predestination or by fate, is responsible for the war, man being the pre-determined victim, I do not see any real ground for believing that we can ever eliminate warfare from human affairs. The Being who, whether personal or impersonal, prompts and unconditionally decrees such horrors, is certainly not on man's side in his endeavour to abolish them. If man has been His victim in the matter once, I think the reasonable course for him is to make up his mind that he will be His victim indefinitely. There might be some hope of reforming man, but when it comes

to reforming the Absolute Being, whether we call Him God, or whether we call it Nature, the hope of enduring peace becomes fantastic.

But it is a totally different matter if the responsibility lies upon man, if sin is an aberration from God's order, and the manifold evils of the war are the discipline of God. Surely this essentially Biblical idea means that the Sovereign of the universe is against the "Outlaws' Market," that it is hateful to Him, and that they who seek by reason and humanity to make an end of it, and supplant it by a finer order, may count upon His guidance and aid.

The victim view of man seems to me to lead logically and inevitably towards Stoicism for oneself and quietism as regards the evil of war, and in the end will play into the hands of the mighty reactionary forces that are sweeping the whole world back into the abyss. The austerer view of the Bible, that man is a responsible being and will be held to account by the Sovereign of the universe, ought, it appears to me, to breed creators of a new and better order. It is quite true that in the manifold confusions of our time we do not find men always where, from their faith or unfaith, we should expect them to be. But in the end great issues have a way of clearing the air, and great beliefs of claiming their own true followers who for a time, by the accidents of their personal history, have strayed into other camps.

It is an essential part, both of the Hebrew Apologia and the New Testament revelation, that man is something a great deal more than a tool or victim of the Sovereign Power who is either above good and evil, or unconscious of either ; that he is first of all a

free and responsible spirit who can choose good or evil, and in the second place that if he chooses and follows evil, either he, or some other with whom his life is interwoven, shall sooner or later suffer for it by the maiming or stunting or privation of life, in the broadest sense of the term. That this is integral to the Christian interpretation of the world, seems to me plain enough. I have said the principle that sin works death runs through Scripture from beginning to end. It is a thread that can only be torn out at the cost of destroying the whole web. But this great law has a purpose behind it. That divine purpose is not exhausted by rewards and punishments : these are means to ends beyond themselves, the growth and the education of the human race which God has created. Under this divine order men and women are meant to be taught by the consequences of their own actions, and in each great crisis their whole future depends upon their aptitude to learn and their loyalty to what they see to be highest.

We are in such a crisis now. We have learned something of the sinfulness of our condition; and the greater part of the intelligence and goodwill of the world has been awakened to discern not only the evil of the past, but the way to the escape from it. That to my mind is the explanation of the war which we derive from the Bible, and I submit that it is a much deeper explanation and more fruitful of promise for the future than the interpretation which simply regards man as victim of an unmoral impersonal power. It rests, as will be recognised, on two beliefs : the first, that man is a free and responsible being, capable of choosing

and pursuing good and evil, and second, that the environment around him is not neutral and morally indifferent to that choice, but in spite of appearance is definitely on the side of the good and against the evil.

Fierce and poignant as we have seen the modern protest against the cruelty and indifference of the universe to be, there can, I think, be little doubt that the great masters of human literature are in great preponderance on the other side. They do not impeach the cosmos as malignant, or even as indifferent, they trace man's sorrows to his defects and ill deserts. They may think of the cosmos as implacably severe and just, but not as making no distinction between good and evil in its reactions upon men. Are Dante and Milton in fundamental discord here with Goethe and Shakespeare? It may be said that this is not surprising when we consider how deeply the Christian lands have been influenced by the Bible. What, then, of *Æschylus* and *Sophocles*? And if we turn from classical antiquity to the Far East, what are we to make of the faith of China that "Heaven" is displeased with those who rule unjustly and visits their people with famine and pestilence? What are we to make of the tremendous conception of Karma and retribution exacted to the uttermost farthing through all the transmigrations of human existence, which has dominated the entire development of the religions of India? Among all peoples man has found in his own accusing conscience a clue to the meaning of his environment. He has not thought of himself as victim, but as sinner, and as he has looked out upon the vast and dimly

lighted universe he has been afraid. He knows inwardly that he has heard the voice of Reality.

Were there space for it, I think it would be easy to show that this is a general human conception, running through the greatest literature of the world. As I have said, there is a general belief of mankind in the existence of gods or supernatural powers, and the belief also that these gods are on the side of the traditional customs and moralities. But nowhere do we find the general human idea of retribution expressed with such poignancy as in Amos and his successors, and nowhere do we find the problem of the undeserved suffering of the righteous finding so mighty an expression as in the Book of Job. The human protest against the human situation which we have stated in its modern form, finds there its classical expression. What are we to make of the answer of the second Isaiah? Is it a real answer to say that all mankind is not only under the law proclaimed by Amos, that if we sin we shall pay for it, but that we are also under the vicarious law under which the innocent can bear for them the consequences of the sins of others? The idea is wholly foreign to the Book of Job, which is dominated throughout by the belief that if God be just and good, then the righteous man shall prosper and the wicked man suffer. Job sees that it is not so, is faced with the horror of believing that the supreme God is wicked, is saved from this by a vision of the splendours of the universe, and confesses that he cannot explain the mystery, but is sure that, in spite of all appearances, God is good, and that he is in the wrong in his doubts. Can

we see to-day where he was in the wrong? Surely in the view that the goodness of God is identical with strict distributive justice and individual requital in this life, which, be it remembered, was the limited horizon within which Job's thoughts moved. Like his friends he desired a world of rigorous forensic justice, and was unable to think God good unless such was the world He had made. Now when we examine the five impeachments which I have quoted, we find that the same is true of these Job's comforters of to-day. Let us take Mr Huxley as typical of the rest. "Natural catastrophes occur and we see thousands of innocent men suffer for no cause. Diseases strike blindly" (*i.e.* irrespective of merit or demerit of the victim), "children are born deformed" (*i.e.* children who did not so deserve), "an idiot child is produced by the best of couples" (*i.e.* couples who deserved to have healthy children), "when we see the success of men who are cruel, unscrupulous or definitely wicked" (and therefore should have been ruined), "the hard lot of others who are industrious and upright . . ." (who deserved to be prosperous). "Most of all when we are confronted by the war . . . then it is difficult for many to believe in a personal God." What Mr Huxley desires before he can believe in a personal God is precisely what Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar desired, *i.e.* a world of exact requital. If he could find that the world of actual experience corresponded to this, he would presumably believe in Him. As it does not, he cannot.

Now let us see what such a world would be like. It would be a world in which everyone got just what he deserved of good or of evil, a world of

merit and demerit, and rewards and penalties, a legal and forensic world. Therefore, it would necessarily have to be an adult world. There could be no children in it, so far as I can think it out. For surely they could hardly come into a system from which grace was excluded. The existence of young, immature and wholly dependent beings and their growth towards maturity, can only be guaranteed if their parents and protectors are prepared to sacrifice themselves for their sakes, independently of the knowledge of whether their children will recompense them or not, or even whether God will recompense them or not. Children cannot live and thrive without love, and love seeketh not her own. The Eliphaz world, therefore, when thought out, must be a world without children, or with children who are little calculating machines on their way to be bigger calculating machines in a profit and loss world automatically dispensing joy and sorrow, life and death according to the *quid pro quo* which we insert in the mechanism. It would be a world in which sheer disinterested grace would be an alien, for what would be the use of men or women giving themselves generously away for others, when in reality nothing could be gained for these others by so doing, since their ultimate fortune would be determined solely by their own personal merit or demerit? It would be a world without generosity, sacrifice or grace, in which the wisest and best would be those who discerned their own interest most clearly by watching the judgments and rewards of God, and adjusting their conduct to the results of their calculations. It would,

therefore, obviously be a world in which, since there was no room for human self-sacrifice, there could be none for the self-sacrificing God, a world without the Cross of Christ.

Mr Aldous Huxley has written a biting satire of scientific Utopias in his book *Brave New World*, where he depicts a world which ignores values in its pursuit and mastery of facts. Into this strays an attractive savage, who by some strange chance of fortune has nurtured his soul upon Shakespeare, and sees love and death and joy and sorrow with Shakespeare's eyes. The end of his adventures in this "brave new world" is his horrified escape by suicide. This is what he thinks of it all. Better by far the world of Romeo and Juliet, and Henry and Falstaff, even if it be also the world of Othello and Hamlet and Lear, than this human hell!

One may doubt if the world of Mr Julian Huxley's desire constructed according to the principle of distributive justice alone would leave him in much better case.

It is deeply relevant to this issue that the great Eastern religions have tried out this conception of exact requital with a thoroughness unknown in any other faith. Indian thought, about the seventh century B.C., had, as we have seen, reached the conclusion that the inequalities of fortune in this world could only be explained by the principle of Karma, under which it was believed that every human being passed through many lifetimes, inheriting in each the requital of joy and sorrow that he had merited in previous existences. No man could escape his Karma, either in this life or the lives to come, until the kalpa or great year of the revolving

cycle had run itself out. So intolerable did this conception prove itself to be, that the goal of orthodox Hinduism was to escape utterly from the terrible "Wheel" by realising that all earthly existence was mere illusion, and that one was identical with Brahman and therefore beyond the world of illusion. Buddhism, starting also from the same belief in Karma, found its escape in the slaying of all desire from which came the illusion of existence, and so attaining Nirvana. In a word, both alike found the requital world of Karma intolerable and found escape by a kind of suicide of all individual existence.

We can transcend this too narrow conception of the universe by the conception of the vicarious law. Forensic justice has its own indispensable place in the development of society, but the moment we take it as adequate to explain the ways of God with man it breaks down altogether; either we must limit its application or commit the same blunder as Naturalism, *i.e.* mutilate reality.

For good or evil and so far as human history goes, men and women and children are not separate atoms. They are individual human beings, and yet they can only attain their full personal life as parts of a whole, as "members" of a society, and it is part of the divine government of the world that just as we profit by the virtues, so we suffer for the sins of others. I have tried to show that a world of this kind is a far better and finer kind of world to live in, and that far finer and greater personalities can be developed in it than in a world governed by strict methods of distributive justice.

(6) The Hebrew Apologia completes itself in its

doctrine of the Last Things. There, too, the creative impulse comes from faith in the Almighty God, of moral purity and grace, which is continually under challenge from the God-denying evil of the world. No coherent faith in God can dispense with an outlook upon the future. So the Hebrew Theodicy deals not only with the past creation of man in the divine image, and his lapse into sin and his present discipline under the vicarious law, but with the consummation of all God's ways with man in the far-off future. Under that challenge faith in the living God projects into the future the vision of a new world order which He will bring into being by His sovereign power in what was called by the prophets the Day of the Lord. In that day God would make His power and purity and grace manifest. In the present evil was manifest and the reign of God was hidden, but in the Day of the Lord the veil would be destroyed and the reign of God would become plain.

Like the advent of Christ in the New Testament the divine interposition is expected to come suddenly, and often speedily. As the present evil is flagrant the Day of the Lord is expected to come with sudden judgment on all existing wickedness of the world and on all unfaithfulness of Israel. In the earlier and happier days of Israel's history the Day of the Lord is thought of as a day of salvation and joy. But as the struggle of the prophets with the sins of their people grows more intense and the ominous shadow of the great Euphrates empires darkens, the note of judgment becomes more prominent, judgment upon Israel for its

unfaithfulness, and judgment upon their cruel and mighty oppressors. Yet always the true meaning and end of the Day of the Lord is not judgment but salvation. The judgment is only for the purifying of the earth. The real and final aim is the complete and world-wide victory of the divine rule, the consummation of the Covenant and the blessedness of the Last Age. Here, as in the New Testament Apocalypse, that Golden Age is described in a multitude of imaginative figures which are sometimes incoherent with each other. This is, of course, inevitable whenever we try to describe the future, for we cannot paint the future save in the colours of the past, and as on every linear view of history the end must be greater than the present or past, the endeavour to depict must break the ordinary moulds of speech and conception which are all, of course, fashioned out of past and present experience. All prophecy and all apocalypse when they depict the future must therefore necessarily show this superficial incoherence.¹ But the general drift of these splendid imaginative pictures of the future is perfectly clear. They vary with the personality and circumstances and dates of the prophets, some being narrower and some wider in their scope. But by the greatest of these the consummation of the divine purpose is depicted in the most splendid terms. There will be a new and deeper covenant. In the final Israel there is no longer any sin, the law of the Lord is "written in the heart." All are taught of God. "The Divine Spirit which now influences prophets only will then be poured out on all alike, on young and

¹ Leckie's *The World to Come and Final Destiny*.

old, on bond and free. This new covenant will be an everlasting covenant like God's great Covenant with man in the constancy of Nature: an unalterable pact, a covenant of peace, which makes its members sure of being heard of God before they ask. . . . The Divine Spirit which now influences prophets only will then be poured out on all alike, old and young, bond and free. From this there results a righteousness which covers the earth as the waters cover the sea. No one acts wickedly any more for the earth is full of the knowledge of God." In a word, the reign of sin in the world is displaced by the reign of God.

But not only will the Spirit of God transform the hearts of men; Nature is transformed as well. The land produces in luxuriant abundance. With the wild beast, with every hostile power, God makes a covenant that they do no harm. Early death will no longer threaten the happy. In fact, according to a still higher view, there is no more death, and God wipes away all tears from their faces.¹ The imagination of the prophet rises still higher. "A new heaven and a new earth receive the happy commonwealth of God."² There begins a wonderful unchanging day. The moon shines like the sun, and the sun as the light of seven days. "It is even said that God is to His people as moon and sun. And this transformation is not to undergo any new change. Like the new ordinances of Nature the seed of Israel is also to be forever before God."³ Nor is this glowing vision confined to the chosen people. Jerusalem remains

¹ Isa. xxv. 8.

² Isa. lxv. 17 and lxvi. 22.

³ Isa. xxx. 26.

in the foreground of the picture.¹ But to the ancient prophets the whole world will one day be "filled with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea." He has sworn by Himself that to Him every knee shall bow. "Thus we have a picture of the people of God surrounded by a world of converted nations. The Old Testament salvation broadens into universalism." The prophetic vision here finds expression in the 72nd Psalm which, with but little change, forms one of the finest of the Christian hymns: "His name (the name of the coming ideal King of Israel) shall endure forever. His name shall be continued as long as the sun. And men shall be blessed in him. All nations shall call him happy. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things, and blessed be his glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen."²

Such was the prophetic vision of the Kingdom of God carried to its utmost reach. There is little here surely in common with the defeatist Christian view that all we can hope for from the long result of God's ways with the world will be the rescue of the elect few from the "mass of perdition" of mankind. Whence did the Hebrew psalmists and prophets derive this sublime conviction that the great brute powers of the earth were doomed to

¹ As one reads these ancient prophecies one is reminded of the tenacity with which Mazzini, for all the breadth and nobility of his conception of an associated humanity, always held on to the faith that Rome must necessarily be the centre of the world. And as has repeatedly been pointed out, of all the moderns Mazzini is likest a prophet of the Hebrew type.

² The quotations are from Schultz's summary, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. ii, chaps. 20 and 21.

go down before the apparently weak powers of the spirit, and that sin and death would vanish from the earth, and that this victory would endure? Their confidence sprang wholly from one source, their faith in the one almighty, pure, just and gracious God. This, and this alone, delivered them from the weary cyclic view of history, gave them the faith in a controlling purpose, and led them to unfold that purpose in terms of the salvation of all mankind. And the thing that drove that faith to unfold its riches with that splendid boldness beyond all question was the challenge of the evil of the world. Their faith in the long result of time rounds out and completes that with which our account of the Hebrew Theodicy began. This is the climax towards which in Nature and in providence God is moving on the linear course of history. It is that which all along He has been creating from the moment "when all the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy."

The same expectation of the triumph of the Kingdom of God in history reappears in the New Testament as the Advent faith. However we may interpret that faith, and here we inevitably meet with the same apparent contradiction as in the Old Testament pictures,¹ whether we think of the Advent as the bodily return of Christ in glory and power, or as the triumph of the Spirit of Jesus in the world of time, it seems to be an essential part of the Christian as of the Hebrew faith, that it shall expect that victory not only in the life to come but in this world. If we cut that out of the

¹ Leckie, *The World to Come and Final Destiny*, pp. 17-19.

picture something essential is taken away, and with the cleavage in the Christian hope there must necessarily come a change in the Christian ethos as well.

(7) But we have not yet completed the picture of the Hebrew Apologia or of its doctrine of the Last Things. It is to us to-day very surprising that the belief in personal immortality only appears at a late stage of the Old Testament revelation. That it should have been so is as good a proof as can be given of the gradual character of revelation. We have to make a distinction, however, between survival and immortality. The science of religion, among many other unexpected results, has shown that in spite of all the terrifying accompaniments of mortality, the human race, as a whole, has always believed that the human spirit lived on after death. The tombs of prehistoric times give the clearest indication of this in the provision which they show for the departed on their journey into the unseen world into which their fellows believed that they had gone. Sir James Frazer has shown that the belief in survival exists among primitive people in practically all ages and all lands. Death, in the sense of mere extinction, seems naturally incredible to man. The acceptance of extinction is a product of artificial civilisation. But the life into which the departed go is usually conceived as poorer and less substantial than life in this present world. The dead live in the realm of shadows or "shades," they are seen sometimes as "ghosts," and are often thought of as jealous of those enjoying the fuller life of the earth. Eminently characteristic of the pagan view of the after-life is the

passage in the eleventh book of the *Odyssey*, where Odysseus meets Achilles in the realm of shades, and congratulates him on his fame among living men and his sway in the underworld, only to meet with the indignant reply:

Speak not soft words concerning death to me,
Glorious Odysseus; rather had I be
A thrall upon the acres to a man,
Portionless and sunk low in poverty,
Than over all the perished dead below
Hold lordship.¹

That the early Hebrews believed in this kind of survival there are many indications in the Old Testament.²

It is difficult for those who have been used to read the Old Testament in the light of the New to realise how bare must have been the outlook on the life beyond death of the great figures of early Hebrew antiquity, but the plain truth is that not till the history was far advanced did any of the Hebrews see what for us to-day seems the inevitable inference from their faith in God, and had little personal hope beyond the grave. Their hopes were concentrated on their descendants, on their people, and on the cause of God. Now and again there are, it is true, gleams of light in the stories of Enoch and Elisha, and hints of something as yet unrevealed, but the working everyday faith even of the devout Israelite had little place for the thought of a consummation beyond the grave. I imagine that they simply accepted the human situation as their fathers had always done, and left their personal future to God

¹ *Odyssey*, Book xi. Mackail's Translation.

² Isa. xiv. 9; Ps. lxxxviii.; Job xxx. 23; etc., etc.

as unknown and unknowable by man. When we think of this acquiescence as strange we are reading back into it our far more highly developed sense of personal individuality and its rights to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." We must remember that the Hebrew acquiescence was then shared by nearly the whole human race. What shattered it from without and dissolved it from within was the Captivity, and the great widening and deepening of the conception of God that came with the greater prophets.

The new faith in personal immortality is thus due to a growing faith in God and a new sense of the worth of the individual man. Neither factor can be ignored. The Captivity shattered the whole protecting shell of the "theocracy" with its king and priesthood and worship and sacred land. Bereft of all these, Israel in captivity was left with only its inward assurance of God's sovereign grace and purity, and His imperative call to moral fidelity to His promises and law if the disaster was to be retrieved. The nation was seen to be less fundamental than the community of faithful individual Israelites, the "remnant," the true Israel, which survived the Exile. With that there came an altogether new sense of the worth and meaning of the individual Israelite, and with that a whole world of new problems, and a great commotion of creative life and thought which finds expression in Job and in the second Isaiah, and in the later psalms. For a time the older ideas of survival in an underworld of the shades lingered on, in strange contrast with the glowing pictures of the future earthly triumph of the Kingdom of God. But the faith which had created

and projected these splendid visions, as time went on, dissolved these survivals. The faithful dead would be raised again to share in the common triumph, and as the individual believer became surer of his value to his gracious God, he became sure also that that God would deliver him from death.

The whole process of thought is laid bare in the 73rd Psalm: "Nevertheless I am continually with thee; thou hast holden my right hand. Thou wilt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth. But God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." The soul, threatened by the sovereign evil of extinction, turns to God, and out of communion with Him derives the assurance of victory over death.

There is a close parallel here with the much earlier use of the Messianic Hope, when the nation, threatened with destruction, turned to its God whose almighty grace had taken it into covenant, and out of its assurance of that sovereign power and grace derived the assurance of ultimate victory over all that threatened its existence.

It was the work of the age of Judaism which succeeded the Old Testament period to combine these two hopes in one under the form of Apocalypse. But into that it is unnecessary here to travel. The roots of both the Messianic Hope and the hope of individual immortality lie deep in the supreme treasure of Israel's history, its faith in the truth of the revelation of the sovereign grace of Almighty God.

That this assurance of immortality is part of the inheritance of all believers in Jesus Christ is, of course, too plain to be ignored. To all Christian believers God is the Almighty Father, and it is incredible that the Almighty Father could suffer any one of his true sons and daughters to pass into nothingness.

Here is to-day the one solid ground for believing in immortality. If God is almighty, and if His nature be love and if, believing this, I love and trust Him in return, the relationship must be imperishable, He cannot let me pass into extinction. He will "guide me with his counsel while I live" and afterwards "receive me to glory." The 73rd Psalm is as true as ever it was. We can only escape its conclusion by denying its premises in the power and grace of God.

Hence the intimate disclosure of the Divine Nature and Purpose which came with Jesus Christ has brought with it a great reassurance and enrichment of the faith in immortality. The conclusion which Israel reached with infinite difficulty at the close of a long process of education has become in the Christian revelation the starting-point of a new and revolutionary development.

It is very significant that even the word immortality rarely occurs in the New Testament. It is a negative though a noble term, and the significant word in the New Testament is "Eternal Life." Jesus Christ is "the Prince of Life, who hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to life through His Gospel." Clearly mere everlasting survival would be a very doubtful boon to man. It is significant, surely, that, as we have seen, Indian

religion has found the idea of eternal transmigration so intolerable that both its great developments in Buddhism and Brahminism have found their chief good in deliverance from it, the one by Nirvana, the other by absorption into the Divine Essence. Even the promise of mere everlasting continuance of our present earthly existence would be found by many to-day a dubious boon. "There are people," it has been said, "who cannot dispose of a day; an hour hangs heavy on their hands, and your offer them rolling ages without end!"¹ From such a heaven of boredom Nirvana might well to some seem a deliverance, but the heaven of Christianity is one of ever-increasing life. We, most of us, possess a dream life, as well as a waking life. Most people, so far as my observation goes, would be sorry to lose that nightly dream life, for on the whole it seems to be a pleasant incident of sleep. Yet few indeed, if they had to choose, would choose it in preference to the real life and love and striving of every day. This may have its sorrows and frustations, but it is real and it is worth while. We may get some idea of what the New Testament means by "Eternal Life" by stating the comparison as a proportion: "As is our dream life to our everyday life, so is our everyday life to the Life Everlasting." Eternal Life is a quality of life indefinitely richer and deeper than common life, and quantitatively it is everlasting. Such is the New Testament transformation of the Old Testament hope. It is the sublimation and intensification of all that is greatest, loveliest and dearest in this present life. It is to be with those whom we love,

¹ Emerson, quoted by Pringle Pattison, *Idea of Immortality*, p. 205.

and who have gone before us, and those whom we love who will follow us, and to be "with Christ" in "the Father's House" for ever and ever. Who would exchange that for any Nirvana?

The attainment of the hope in immortality completes the Hebrew Theodicy as I read it. The six seminal ideas, which I have enumerated, the linear conception of history, which we find expressed in the Kingdom of God; Divine creation; man's freedom and sin; suffering and death as man's judgment and discipline; the vicarious law; the Messianic age and the hope of immortality—they one and all spring from the great creative centre of the Old Testament revelation, the conception of God as sovereign, pure and righteous and gracious. Faith in such a God, in such a world as ours, leads inevitably to such an interpretation of His ways with men. Each one of these seminal interpretative truths is given and attained in the struggle with evil, and taken all together in connection with the conception of God, they give us the substance of what is known as Old Testament Theology. I believe that it is still the ground-work of all true Theism, the outline and the way in which we must interpret the great riddle of human existence, before which so much of the graver thought of our age stands bewildered and dumb.

XI

THE SUBSTANCE OF THE FAITH

WE are now drawing near the conclusion of our argument. We began with the riddle of the world. I have endeavoured to show that every human life has at its heart something sacred, a recognition of what is highest, which it is at once man's supreme good to realise and his supreme obligation to follow. The existence of this higher nature is that which above all distinguishes man from the natural world which begot and which sustains him. Yet this element in man which makes him sacred is continually threatened from without and within man himself, and is ultimately destroyed by the surrounding world of reality. The enduring tension between what we discern to be sacred and what is felt to be real and powerful seems to me to lie at the heart of all the great religions, with their continual quest for life and victory over the world, and of most of, if not of all, the great philosophies, with their ceaseless quest for some intelligible explanation of the human situation. No religion or philosophy which ignores this issue or tries to solve it by denaturing or explaining away man's sense of the good and the right can possibly endure. It may have its brief day but it will break up and pass away.

Having thus endeavoured to set forth the fundamental problem we passed on to consider the latest

modern attempt to deal with it in Humanism. I have tried to show why Humanism has reappeared in our time, and also how unsatisfactory it is both in theory and in practice. In the process of criticising it we have begun to develop against it, first, the spiritual view of the world which seems to me inevitably to follow from recognition of the world of values, and our moral obligation to seek and do the highest that we know, and secondly, the fuller world of divine revelation as we have it in the Old Testament. Briefly stated this solution of the riddle is that God, in whom sovereignty and supreme wisdom and goodness and beauty unite, is through Nature creating a kingdom of free human spirits in His own image and likeness for everlasting communion with Himself. I have endeavoured also to show how within that Hebrew history of which the Old Testament literature is the expression, there developed the elements of an interpretation of the world and of human life which forms a Theodicy, an explanation and justification of the ways of God with man, and have enumerated its characteristic ideas, man "made in God's image," his freedom and sin, the moral order of the universe, the vicarious law, the Kingdom of God, and, at last, immortality. The focal centre is the conception of and faith in God. It is in this central light that the Hebrews explain the nature of man and the world. "If we think of God so, then we must think of man and his world thus." The Hebrew prophets "come down upon the world from the thought of God," and interpret its riddle from their knowledge of God. That we have here, often in crude and elementary form, a

very great interpretation of the mystery of human life and death, seems to me clear.

In reading our more notable modern books of philosophy which grapple with the mystery, I have often been deeply impressed by the ability which they show in dealing with matters of detail. But when I have mastered the whole argument and got inside the writer's thoughts of the universe and of human life, I have often been growingly conscious of a profound intellectual dissatisfaction, a sense that the construction is unreal; that it denatures and sophisticates in order to reach a unity that is factitious; and that it imprisons the intelligence rather than sets it free. And when some complacent Humanist replies that this is simply because my thinking is "wishful thinking," with the implied assumption that his own is not, and that I am allowing my desires to determine my thoughts, I am acutely aware that it is not so, and that there is something deeply *irrational* in his own construction of thought which says that there is no meaning in the universe, no end to which it moves, though there are causes which impel its mighty course. Nor is the case better when one turns to some modern philosophical endeavours to solve the underlying and persistent problem. Can the human intelligence rest, for instance, permanently in the conception of an Absolute Reason which with infinite labour and wisdom creates human personalities only to engulf them in itself again; or in the conception of "space-time with a *nisus* or 'striving' in it" which is the ultimate source of all things and men and is always endeavouring to create God or the Ideal; or with a universe

whose source, if any, is unexplained, and whose one great aim is to create "wholes"?

I am haunted by the sense of something futile and irrational in the cosmic process if this is all that can be made of it by modern thought, something sub-human, by whatever sonorous name we may call it, and this staggers not simply my "wishes" but my intelligence.

I find in the Hebrew interpretation, given not in any scholastic or systematic form, often in mere fragments of piercing intuition, the elements of something that better satisfies my reason as well as my imagination, a profounder and broader view of the amazing panorama of Nature and of human life.

It is true that there is nothing in the Old Testament resembling a modern philosophic treatise, no systematic arrangement of topics or advance of an argument towards a conclusion. But modern historical and literary criticism of the Old Testament has been so concerned with analysis of its literature, the development of its ritual, its historical affiliations and so forth, that it has often seemed to ignore its fundamental unity of view of God and the world and the soul, and is unable to see the wood in its preoccupation with the trees. But if, as in the case of the modern philosophical books of which I have spoken, we, as it were, stand back far enough from the trees to see the wood, from details to see the whole, there emerges a deep underlying interpretation of the mystery of human life, which is on a different plane of importance than any merely literary or historical criticism. "Scripture has a meaning and a view of its own on most moral and religious questions, and not more

than one view really, although, of course, different writers may present the view with all the variety natural to different minds, and diverse circumstances, a view not to be inferred from any single text, but from the whole general tenor of thought of the Scripture writers.”¹ It takes much labour to become deeply familiar with this underlying mind, but it is there, underlying all the variety of literary form and developmental change, coherent, veracious, profound and, to my thinking, intellectually more satisfying than any of its great philosophical rivals, ancient or modern. The Old Testament is the classical literature of monotheism, and so long as men believe in the living God it will determine the main lines, not only of their thought of Him, but of man and of the world of Nature as well. Within this interpretation of the universe alone, I believe, can we include and explain the salient realities of the riddle without ignoring or blunting any of them, the baffling mixture of good and evil in the world, the sacredness of human personality, the sinfulness of man, the glory and tragedy of human life, even the reassuring blend of comedy in it, and finally the astonishing beauty which accompanies and blends with it all.

But the Old Testament revelation is obviously incomplete, and the more deeply we enter into it and are possessed by it, the more deeply must we feel this. It shows us a living God, through Nature creating and disciplining a family of spiritual beings for full communion with Himself, that is to say, for an ever fuller interchange of thought and

¹ A. B. Davidson, *Old Testament Theology*, p. 514.

affection to which there shall be no end. The motive of creation and providence is pure "grace," that is to say forthcoming and inexhaustible love. Hebrew thought moves here on a deeper plane than Indian thought, which sometimes speaks of Brahman as creating the worlds in sheer joyful sport, as a riot of Divine imagination. Monotheism can include even that in its deeper and wider range. God is shown to us in the Old Testament as rejoicing in His works of creation on the first morning, "when all the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy." But to the Hebrew God created man and created Israel, not as Shakespeare created Hamlet and Falstaff, or Rembrandt his "Man in Armour," or Wagner his heroes of "The Ring," out of sheer joy in creative imagination. A Divinity who, for His own artistic joy alone created the drama of human life and death with all its anguish and sin would have been an omnipotent devil. Not Divine Imagination but Divine Grace was at the foundations of the Old Testament believer's universe. The God whom he knew and worshipped was a God who created because He loved and desired an answering love. To win this He is ready Himself to suffer with them. "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old."¹ There is something much more here than the Artist's delight in His creation, there is the Father's sympathy with His children. Now it was unthinkable that, with a

¹ Isa. lxiii. 9.

profoundly moral conception of God like this, the growing spirit of the Hebrew people should be permanently contented with its earlier belief that the grace of God was for His people alone. Lifted and carried beyond themselves by their growing faith in God, the greater prophets looked forward to a world-wide salvation when "the earth should be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea." But that, as the prophet Jeremiah saw, implied a new Covenant.

Three things, we can see now, were essential for the universalising of the faith of Israel.

First: the widening and clearing of the whole thought of God; second: the universalising of the Covenant of Grace; and, thirdly: a power which could set every human soul into such immediate relations with the living God that such a soul could be made aware of God and of what God desired him to be and do. These are the three new and essential things which were all given in Jesus Christ, and in the coming of the Spirit, and which transformed the Old Covenant into the New, by the creative grace of God. Taken together they define, I believe, for us the substance of the Christian faith, which is the subject of this closing lecture.

I have used this familiar phrase, "the substance of the faith," simply because I have been unable to find one more expressive. But, in truth, in this connection the word "substance" is a misleading term unless we define further what we mean. To the ordinary reader it suggests a material reality, a thing, and this, when applied to something which is alive, is obviously inappropriate. The substance

of a human body is dead matter; but you cannot explain an organism in terms of the stuff of which it is composed. To the philosopher the term at once suggests "substance and accident," the distinction between what matters and what does not matter. Now, there are many things in our faith that may not be at the focal centre that we believe to be of grave moment. Yet, surely, if we are to be true to realities we need some distinction between what in our faith is absolutely central and what is not. What I am seeking to set forth here are these central truths which, to use a word familiar to those who know the Church history of Scotland, used to be quaintly called "the marrow of modern divinity," and the dialectic theology in Germany to-day, following Luther, calls "the Word of God," and we call "the Gospel," the very heart of the Revelation. The word Gospel, as we know, means the "Good News of God," and as I understand the matter, the very substance of the faith is all concerned with God, as He is described in the threefold name: Father, Son and Spirit, or, to use Johannine language, Christ as the Truth, the Way and the Life. I shall begin, then, this brief endeavour to state the substance of the faith, with the new revelation of God, the truth about God as revealed in Jesus Christ. We shall not be concerned in what follows with the doctrinal controversies about the person of Christ or the Trinity, which followed the New Testament age, and were finally stratified in the Catholic creeds of Christendom. We shall be concerned rather with the protoplasm which vertebrated itself in these controversies into the

¹ Jer. xxxi. 31-34.

authoritative dogma, the intuitions and values of faith rather than the formulæ of theology. If the conclusions reached in this lecture are sound they must of course lead to a definite theology, but such a theology lies outside the plan of these lectures. Here we are in quest of that which lies behind all the Christian creeds, the new world of experience and revelation which finds expression in the earliest Christian literature. It will not, I think, be possible to avoid some repetition here of what has been said or implied in earlier lectures, but I shall endeavour to set such repetition in the light of their new context in the revelation of God in Jesus Christ.

I

As we have seen, the first essential for a new and universal covenant with the human race was the new disclosure of God in the teaching and in the personality of Jesus of Nazareth. The New Testament name for God is no longer Jahweh or Elohim or Adonai : it is "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." God is He whom Jesus Christ habitually spoke of as "the Father" or "My Father." The parable of the Prodigal Son is a clear proof that our Lord believed in the Divine Fatherhood of God over sinful humanity as such. The parable, be it remembered, was spoken to the Pharisees, who regarded the publicans and sinners as outcasts and "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel," men and women outside the covenant, who, being apostates, were even as heathen. The point of the parable lies in its universalism as against their narrowness. It is, in effect, a picture

of the universal Father. The name which Jesus so frequently used for God, "the Father," it may fairly be argued, has, also, this wider reference.

Thus the term "Father" describes what God is in Himself. It does not concern merely His relation to men, but it declares His very nature and that which lies behind all relationships.¹ In the Gospels the Fatherhood of God is, as it were, spoken of by our Lord in three concentric relationships. The intensest and innermost circle of light is our Lord's own consciousness of God as His Father. It is manifest from the new material brought by the science of religion from all quarters of the world and all ages of time that no other human being has ever approached Jesus Christ in this consciousness of God as Father. The labours of a century of scholarship have familiarised all students of the theme with the story of human religion. We possess secure and abundant knowledge from the monuments and the temples, the papyri, the parchments and the books, how far men at their highest have really got in knowledge of and intimacy with the Sovereign Unseen Power. And we know with security that something absolutely new emerges here in history in this man of Nazareth. "No man knoweth the Father save the Son." That is a unique saying. He does not say "No man knoweth God save the Son." That would be to deny the truth of the Old Testament revelation. What He does say is that He alone has a deeper secret, the essential Fatherhood of the Sovereign Power. Abraham, Moses, Isaiah were in the outer courts.

¹ Gilbert, "Fatherhood of God," in Hastings' *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, vol. i, p. 580.

He has come forth from the holiest of all. We shall be wholly unjust to the testimony of the Gospels if we fail to recognise that Jesus Christ always speaks of God as His Father in this peculiar sense. He has an original filial consciousness. But it is equally clear that He desires to communicate the filial life to humanity. His followers are to win it and are to "make disciples of all nations," that is to say, lead them into the filial life which He Himself lived. All this is clear to the students of our Lord's teaching who will give their plain meaning to His sayings. These taken together imply the universal Fatherhood of God.

But we have something more impressive even than verbal teaching in the personality of Jesus Christ. We have here a human life wrought out in every detail in conformity with the Fatherhood of God. There is a curious blindness as to this among some to-day. They fail to see how deeply rooted both the character and the teaching of Jesus are in His conception of God. Mr Middleton Murry, for instance, has written one book about *Jesus of Nazareth* and another book about *God*. The first is full of fine and eloquent appreciation of Jesus and His moral teaching. The latter shows plainly that he rejects entirely His revelation of the Father. But in fact the two are inseparable. If Jesus Christ was wrong in His representation of God, then the kind of life that He expected of His disciples is not admirable at all. If the great universe is not controlled by the Almighty Father, then the incessant demands for faith which Jesus makes are unreasonable and misleading.

The true disciple is to be free from anxious care, he is to be disinterested in his service of God and man, he is to live in prayer, drawing his strength to love and serve from communion with His Father, who is Himself the great Lover and source of all love. He is to be perfect as his heavenly Father is perfect. Instead of being self-centred we are to be centred in God. But the nerve of the whole ideal of character is that we may absolutely trust the Father to care for us better than we can care for ourselves. It is as men grow in that faith that anxious care and fear fade out, and they are able to give themselves away in love and service, and the new type of character, humility, disinterestedness and love, comes in. Strike away that basis of faith in the Father and the whole type of character becomes foolish and visionary because out of touch with reality, and Jesus appears "a beautiful and ineffectual angel beating in the void his luminous wings in vain." If Jesus was wrong about the Almighty Father, then His whole conception of what men and women ought to be was mistaken. We may for a while believe and say that it is a noble and beautiful ideal, but, severed from their roots in faith, love and hope of the Christian type must soon wither and die out of the world, and pity and resignation take their place. If Christ's demand for faith is unreasonable, the whole type of character becomes unreasonable as well. If on the other hand we hold fast to love and hope as Christ conceived them, if we see in Him a real embodiment of what we ought to be, then sooner or later we must accept His revelation of the Divine

Fatherhood.¹ We cannot take Christ as Lord, we cannot even take Him as Leader without taking the "Father" with Him. The two are inseparable.

By calling God "the Father" our Lord plainly had the analogy with human fatherhood in His mind. He obviously means every human being to understand that human fatherhood was the likeliest thing the world could offer to the nature of God. Nor are the points of similarity hard to discover. They are three in number: origin, loving care and kinship of nature. We need not linger on the first as it is the most obvious. The second is that most frequently taught by our Lord, and very many illustrations of this might be given. The parable of the Prodigal Son; the repeated assurances in the Sermon on the Mount that our Heavenly Father numbers the very hairs of our heads, that He knows our needs and will care for them, so that we need not be anxious; and the passage in Luke xi. where the analogy between human fatherly solicitude and the divine care rises to a climax in the closing sentence, "If ye, then, being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father which is in heaven give good gifts," not simply to members of the chosen race, but "to them that ask him," are sufficient to bring home the conviction that God in His love and care for His human family deeply resembles man at his best. The third element, "kinship of

¹ There is a close parallel here with the relationship between the moral imperative which we saw to carry in the heart of it assurance of the nature of Reality, and the underlying New Testament conviction that men ought to believe in Christ's revelation of the Father. There can be no such obligation in either case, and no sin in "unbelief" if the corresponding revelation is untrue.

nature," is simply an extension of the second. It has its roots like the other deep in the Old Covenant. We find it in the Creation narrative, where it is said that God made man in His own image, an image which, though injured, remained undestroyed by the Fall. The conception runs all through the Old Testament. Indeed the Old Testament is far more disposed to read God in terms of man, is far more anthropomorphic than the New. But as the religion develops these excrescences are dropped. The kinship between man and God is more deeply understood. It is seen to be one of the Spirit, and not of bodily form or natural temperament.

There is at the moment a phrase in common use in our theology which seems to me clean against the teaching of Scripture. It is said that God is "wholly other" than man. However well intentioned this phrase may be as a protest against presumptuous glorifying of man, after the fashion of Humanism, it is yet misleading. If God is "wholly other" than man then He must be wholly unknowable by man. The phrase is one of these rhetorical exaggerations that may easily become dangerous when they become lodged in general usage.

But the soul of Hebrew religion in its noblest manifestation in the prophets asserts this kinship in all those utterances of faith which assert the righteousness and grace of God. To assert these is to carry human values into the very heart of the universe, to proclaim that "That which sits dark at the centre" behind Orion and the Pleiades and the Bear, that Sovereign Dweller in the Innermost is deeply akin to man and can be known and wor-

shipped by man, not merely because of His awful might but because, judged by the standards of men, He is just and good. That is precisely what makes the difference between the Upanishads and the Vedanta on the one hand and Hebrew prophecy on the other. Indian thought believes that Brahman is "wholly other" than man, beyond good or evil. But there is no reason why we who hold another faith should so state the transcendent moral perfection of God. He is only "wholly other" in the sense that He is greater, mightier and better than we can conceive, and therefore that we can never trust Him enough. But if He is really the "wholly other" in any other sense, we can never trust Him at all. All these elements of likeness between the human and the Divine Fatherhood are thus present in the Old Testament. In the psalmists and the prophets we find occasional references to God as the Father of Israel, and once or twice of his Fatherhood of the Messiah, as the representative of Israel, but Jesus Christ alone made the name both individual and universal, and revealed to every man that he may look up into the face of God and say "My Father."

I believe then that we can only understand the human life of Jesus and His plan for the salvation of the human race by realising that for Him the first thing that He had to do was to change their whole conception of God and to lead them into the heart of His own life in the Father. Unbelief in the Father was the dark road of sin and sorrow and all the human tragedy. That seems clear from His perpetual insistence on faith. What is the substance of His teaching about the Kingdom of

God? Is it not, to begin with, that in Him the life of heaven has come down to men in principle already, and with it an end of sin and tragedy, if men will only lay hold of it and realise the filial life by faith, hope and love? God has given the Kingdom, it is for them to take it. At last, when He sees that they will not take it yet, He assures them that God will bring it none the less, that its final victory is sure, and goes on through His death and resurrection and the coming of the Spirit to prepare the way for the final victory of the Kingdom of the Father. He had fulfilled His vocation to the uttermost. He had made His life so massively and completely filial that none who came under its spell could ever afterwards think of God save as "the Father." But if they think of Him as the Sovereign Father, they must think of the whole end of Creation and Providence as being Fatherly, the creation of a world of spirits for communion with God. They must also think of men as made in God's image for His purpose of love. They must think of them, therefore, as sacred. This will inevitably bring them up against the reality of sin. There can be no talk of sin where there is no moral standard or divine image in man, no shadow unless there is a light to cast it. Hence He who conceived us nobly of mankind and their destiny is He who speaks most plainly about sin. Thus from the truth of the Divine Fatherhood there radiates a doctrine of man. From it there inevitably arises a doctrine also of the world of Nature as a system of order and purpose in the great whole.

Thus the most characteristic principles of the Hebrew Apologia, of which I have spoken in the

last lectures, are taken up into the new doctrine of God. But they come to us, as it were, passed through the mind of Christ and transmuted by His Spirit.

II

So far I think there will be broad general agreement as to the substance of the faith by all who desire to call themselves by the Christian name. But at this point deep and wide divergences begin to appear between what we may call Modernist or Liberal theology and that interpretation which is common alike to Catholic and Evangelical theology. I am not thinking here mainly of the cleavage between them on what is known as the "miraculous" or "supernatural" elements in the New Testament revelation. Many, as is well known, have felt this "miraculous" element to be a great burden on their faith in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and have endeavoured to simplify that faith by discarding all narratives of the "miraculous" as mythical or legendary. I have discussed this whole question of the "miraculous" element in the Gospels in a volume¹ published some years ago, and as I have seen no reason to modify, in any material way, the views there expressed, I do not propose to travel farther in the matter at present. I would only say in passing that in my judgment the real difference between the Humanitarian view and the view there expressed, lies in the fundamental conception of Nature. The Humanitarian holds that Nature is a rigid system of natural uniformities which can be completely calculated by mathe-

¹ *The Faith that Rebels*, Student Christian Movement Press.

matical methods. I believe that that is an abstract account of the world of Nature, that every abstract account, in the very nature of the case, ignores the opulent individuality and freedom which are present in Nature as in human life, and that Nature has in it potentialities of life and beauty which can respond to the touch of the spiritual Master of Nature, as the keys of a musical instrument respond to the genius of a musician. You and I can perhaps do very little with the instrument beyond class exercises, but the great artist can make it speak with the tongues of men and of angels. The "miracles" of Jesus, and, above all, His resurrection, to me, at least, reveal new things in the depth and wonder of the world, and the greatness and love of Him who created and sustains and works through it. But far graver than the difference between the Humanitarian view and the Catholic and Evangelical belief in the "miraculous," is that to which we must now approach.

Consistent Humanitarians, as has been said in the earlier lectures, see in Jesus Christ only the last and greatest of the prophets, who completed the line of Hebrew prophecy, and read the riddle of the world by discovering the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man, and at last died for His conception of God. It is, as we have seen, not a little thing to have got so far as that in our difficult age. Yet is it really true to the facts of history, and does it meet the deepest needs of the human spirit? ¹ We

¹ We are able now to raise this latter question without being open to the charge of "wishful thinking," for we have, I believe, given solid grounds for believing that the universe is an intelligible and spiritual order, controlled by the Sovereign God. In such an order we have the right to assume that man's moral necessities are a clue to Reality.

cannot here go into the first of these questions, except to say that it implies so forcible a handling of the data in the Gospels that it is not surprising that the question, "Did Jesus ever live?" had for a time a very considerable vogue. And the whole development of apostolic thought about Jesus Christ, as we find it laid bare in the Epistles, is quite different from what, on the Humanitarian view of Him, we should have expected from the disciples of so great a teacher. On that view the whole stress of their thought should have been directed to the subjects of His teaching, the Divine Fatherhood and human Brotherhood, rather than that they should dwell with "noxious exaggeration" on the personality of their Master and on the Holy Spirit of God. For, still on the Humanitarian view, these are false tracks of thought and devotion, like the later adoration of the Virgin and the saints. The vital point here is that in this simplification of the full Christian conception of Jesus Christ, Humanitarianism, without intending to do so, greatly impoverishes the whole Christian conception of God. What did we see to have been the end of all the earlier revelation, but the bringing all mankind into communion with God, the creation of a true household and family of God?

The weakness of all mere Humanitarianism and "philosophical Theism," however devout and intellectually satisfying it may be as compared with all other philosophies, is the extraordinary difficulty of sinful, finite and mortal men coming into any real intimacy of communion with God at all. Yet Theism can only endure as a philosophy if it can

vindicate itself as a life. Two great barriers stand in the way: the bad conscience and the weakness and finitude of mortal man. No morally sane man is wholly at ease with his own conscience. How then can he be at home with the Omniscient and Almighty One who speaks in the imperatives of conscience? And if he cannot be at home with God, how can he have communion with Him?

The other barrier, which has become much higher and harder to cross in our own day than in any other age, is that caused by the unimaginably great disparity between God and man. Science has shown that the universe is incomparably vaster in space and time than our forefathers knew. Its Author and Sustainer and Sovereign, therefore, is greater than prophet or apostle ever dreamed. But that removes God farther from us. If it is difficult for a plain man to be at home with a king, how much more with the King of kings! If a psalmist within his little home-farm of a cosmogony, looking up to the starry vault which to him was the roof of the world, could say, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him?" what are we to say, for whom the boundaries of stellar space and time have so widened as to make our planet like a mote in the sunlight? The communion of man with the Creator of that unimaginably great universe seems to many a modern man like a foolish childish dream. I think that no one who thinks deeply at all can to-day possibly escape facing these two deep hesitations of the human spirit when invited to commune with God.

(1) Let us consider them both carefully. As regards the former, it may be said that the psalmists knew nothing of the "incarnation," that they were one and all simple monotheists, and yet that they and the prophets gloriously surmounted the gulf set up by man's sinfulness between them and the purity of God. But surely the obvious truth is that these Old Testament men were not simple theists at all. They were in a radically different position from modern Humanitarianism. The fact is that the entire religious life of the Old Testament is based upon the rooted conviction of every true Israelite that Almighty God had, after a quite unprecedented and unique fashion, approached His people and entered into covenant relations with them. This Divine initiative lies at the foundation of everything distinctive in the life and thought of Israel.

I write these lectures in the heart of a city where every structure is made of granite. The dwelling-houses, the municipal buildings, the monuments, the pavements, the harbours are all fashioned of the grey enduring stone. The very soil is triturated granite. It conditions everything in the life of the people in the valley and regions from which the city draws its population: the harvests, the forests, the climate, the quality of the water and even the air. Moreover the very struggle to master and utilise the qualities of the stone and the soil has profoundly influenced the character of the people.

Now what the granite is to the appearance and the life of this region the historical Covenant of Grace with Israel was to the life of the chosen

people. It underlay everything else, land, law, sacrifice, prophecy and kingship. The land was given them by the grace of God. They had to fight for it, but they believed they were fighting for what was their own by the grace of God. The Law was the way of life and worship, fitting those who were under grace. Guilt offerings were grace ordinances for the acknowledgment and "covering" of sins against the Covenant and its laws; the prophets were God's messengers sent to recall people to the obligations of the Covenant and to remind them of its promises. The kings were God's chosen and ordained servants and vicegerents for security and order in the life of the covenanted folk, and so on. Every Israelite awoke each day to the sense that he was within the grace of the God who had approached and called and pledged His people to live within His grace and for His service alone. He lived, as it were, among sacraments, within a grace world, a peculiar world of the manifested favour and love of God, an environment that he could always take for granted and on which he could build his own life and fortunes. He had not to win it by his own deserts, it was his secure inheritance as an Israelite. This is the background of the entire life and thought of the Old Testament. We may say that it was a complete illusion, or we may, with the Israelite, believe that there was a real Covenant of Grace between God and man. But whether it were a true or false belief there can be no doubt at all that every psalmist and prophet believed it, and this faith is the explanation of the extraordinary intimacy and confidence with which they speak of God. That there is nothing whatever correspond-

ing to this in modern Humanitarian Theism is too obvious for argument. Furthermore, to understand the full range of this Old Testament conception we must not think of it as a simple bargain or contract between God and man. Such bargains are not unconditional. If one party breaks the bargain the other considers himself as released from any obligation. But, to the Hebrews, God, in His grace, had chosen Israel once for all, had pledged Himself to be to His people all that a God could be, and had called it in implicit faith on that promise to give itself wholly to Him. Faith in that faithfulness and constancy to that Covenant lie behind both the persistent belief of the prophets that in the end God's cause would triumph, even though it might be only through a faithful "remnant," and in the unconditional demand for obedience to the divine commands, though everything should be sacrificed save loyalty alone. Such, then, was the faith of ancient Israel, and such the place in its life of the Covenant of the Grace of God. Such was the way, too, in which the ancient Israelite overcame the guilt consciousness. "I will believe in the mercy of God," said the psalmist, "for ever and ever." When he knew that he had gravely offended there was the grace institution of sacrifice, whereby God "covered" his sin. But so long as he was in the nation whom God in His grace had chosen to be His own he lived in the world of grace and knew that God Himself had bridged the gulf between His purity and man's sin, that He loved him and needed him and had taken, and was taking, the initiative of grace with him. Now it is, of course, impossible for us to-day

to go back to that Old Covenant, and I dwell upon it now only by way of leading up to the New, and bringing out the deep difference between modern Humanitarian Theism and the full New Testament faith. Under merely "Humanitarian Theism," with Christ as our leader and example only, we can, I believe, reach a reasoned conviction that the universe is spiritual and that it has its source and purpose in a pure eternal Mind. But what of communion with that Perfection? That must be reduced for most people, it appears to me, to human striving after that which is dim and afar, clouded in all sensitive minds by a sense of their unworthiness and failure, yet possessing occasional high moments of insight. That this is much, and that it has sustained fine and generous minds, we may gladly admit. But that it is really communion with God in the full New Testament sense we must as certainly deny. What makes the difference? In the end, and this is of capital importance, the difference is due to a different and, I cannot help feeling, a greatly impoverished conception, not simply of Jesus of Nazareth, but of Almighty God.

What is the radical difference between the two conceptions? It is, as I have said, the difference between the God who waits and the God who comes. The universe before which, in the years of the dawn of the Christian Church, the men who wrote the New Testament stood, was not for them the same old cosmos as that before which the prophets stood, illuminated more fully by the last and greatest of them. It was a cosmos indefinitely changed and transformed by a new emergence within it of God Himself, a new initiative from the eternal

world of the grace of God. What they tell us about with amazement and gratitude, is not, first of all, that they have discovered new truths, but that something new has *happened*, which for them has transfigured not only the past, but the present and the future. Of course, therefore, it has brought with it new truth about the old world, but that is not the primary thing. The primary thing is something new and creative. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself" by taking a new initiative towards the whole human race. What was the nature of that initiative? In exploring its meaning we cannot do better than take the clue given us by Jesus Christ Himself, in those few words which He spoke before the last supper: "This cup is the New Covenant in my blood which is shed for the many for the remission of sins." The speaker was obviously thinking of the historic scene at Mount Sinai when the institution of the Old Covenant took outward form, and according to the Hebrew fashion was ratified by a solemn sacrifice. The New Covenant is no longer with one little nation: it is, in the Divine intention, with all mankind. The essential thing in it is that it is God who makes it. How profoundly important for the possibility of man's communion with God this is, an illustration may make clear.

^ A great personality appears in our time, let us suppose, as Gautama appeared in Benares or Socrates in Athens, and his words and deeds awaken the deep admiration and trust of some obscure youth who greatly desires his friendship, but who, conscious of his own obscurity and un-

worthiness, shrinks from seeking the fellowship of one so much greater and better than himself. He may secure an interview with him. But an interview with him is not a friendship, and so long as the initiative lies wholly with the seeker it cannot grow into one, for he is bearing the whole burden of it, and the finer his own nature the more acutely conscious of this will he be, and the less able to be his true self in the presence of the other. But the whole situation becomes radically transformed from its very foundations when the greater takes and keeps the initiative with the less, and with patient and disinterested kindness bears with him and continues to seek his friendship. Still more is this the case when in spite of grievous offences against friendship the greater persists in seeking the less, and carries in long-suffering generosity the whole burden of the initiative. Now just as we have seen that the covenant of God's grace to Israel underlies everything distinctive in the life of Israel, so it is this deeper initiative of God's grace that in the same way lies behind the entire thought and life of the earliest Christian Church, as it is mirrored in the Acts, Epistles and Apocalypse. The absolutely vital point is that "God was in Christ," beginning a new covenant and life of intimacy with the human race, "mankind, sinners as such" as the old theologians said. Now this is quite a different conception from that of Jesus as the discoverer of new truths about the old cosmos of Nature and humanity. It tells, if I may speak paradoxically, of a cosmic change, and a new environment for humanity. Men may make even the sub-polar regions more habitable for humanity

by flooding the Arctic darkness and cold with incandescent electric light and heat, and so can make isolated spots habitable for man. They can do that of themselves by a new human research and technique. One may compare that to what can be achieved by man struggling up to God through an unchanged cosmos. But what would that be in comparison with an astronomical change which flooded these icy zones with light and warmth, not from the earth but from the heavens, and so set free the latent energies of organic life in tropical opulence and splendour?

Something like this is what we find in the New Testament, and it explains and justifies the intense interest of the early disciples in the personality of Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit. Of the latter element in the substance of the Christian faith we shall speak presently. Meanwhile we shall confine ourselves to the former. Harnack, in his book *What is Christianity?* has said that the substance of the first Gospel was the Kingdom of God, God the Father, and the higher righteousness, and that "the Gospel as Jesus proclaimed it has to do with the Father only and not with the Son." I do not think that the rest of that most attractive book is at all consistent with this saying. It is one of other inconsequences which may perhaps be attributed to its extempore form. It is plainly inconsistent with the passage in the Synoptic Gospels which Harnack accepts as genuine: "no one knoweth the Father save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him," and that it would have been repudiated by the entire early Church seems to me too plain from the Acts of the Apostles and the

apostolic writers generally, to need detailed discussion. It was primarily in the personality of Jesus Christ that the first disciples discerned God. Through the Son they saw the Father and became aware of the new initiative of which I have spoken and of the essential nature of the new epoch or Kingdom of Heaven or God.

If Jesus does not belong to the heart of His own Gospel, then who was He? Leader but not Lord. If not Lord then certainly not God. But if not God, what? A prophet? But He certainly claimed that His forerunner was "more than a prophet," and said that before His own judgment-seat "all nations would be gathered." A demigod? That would be to say that He was neither God nor man. In that case what would become of His full revelation value? "It is a weary way to God, but a wearier far to any demigod." The moment we raise these questions we get into the centre of that tumult of thought about Jesus which we find in the first Christian centuries, which reached a definite stage in the creed of Nicæa. It runs right back, however, into the apostolic age. We see Paul using one idea after another, current in the thought of his time, to explain to the earliest communities who Jesus was. He and every other New Testament writer start from the assurance that He was the Messiah or Christ. The Humanitarian conception of Him as a prophet would obviously have been thought by him to be inadequate. To every true Jew the Messiah was He who "completed the history of the world" by bringing in complete and final salvation. But even this did not satisfy Paul. He goes on to speak of

Him as "the second Adam," then as "the Man from Heaven," and then, though he does not use the word, the Logos, before all worlds and all angels, and then as being "on an equality with God." It is, I think, quite clear what is the motive that drives him on. It is the fundamental Christian faith that in Jesus Christ in some absolutely unique fashion we have the new initiative of God, opening for mankind a new possibility of communion with Himself. To reduce the Gospel to the teaching of a man about God is, therefore, to reduce the very substance of the faith. However we or after ages may formulate it, the Gospel is the advent of God to man in Jesus Christ His Son. Here, and here alone, I believe, can we transcend that disastrous dilemma of the soul into which we come when we think our way to God along the lines of Humanitarian Theism alone. The only God that to-day is worth believing in, or that it is possible to believe in, is He in whom supreme reality and sovereignty, and also absolute moral purity, are identified. But how is communion with such an One possible to sinful man?

(1) There is a profound tension here between the moral and the religious nature of man, and surely there must be a deep disquiet even in the spirits of the purest when they realise the human situation. There is a gulf between God and man that cannot be bridged from the human side, for the strait seems to widen as we build the piers. I do not see how it can be bridged at all except from the side of God. That is the great Christian story of the grace of God incarnate in Jesus Christ, something coming from a depth in God beyond all

normal human expectation of ordinary justice or even ordinary love. "He that has not seen the grace of God as a wonder has never seen it at all." When one has seen God in Christ after this fashion, especially in the climax of His manifestation in the Cross, enduring the whole violence of human malignity and unbelief, bearing the burden and the consequence of sin, deeply measuring it and appraising it, and yet forgiving it, one can wholeheartedly believe in the forgiving grace of God.

Something new passes into the conception of God through the Incarnation and the Cross which was not there before, and with the God so revealed it is possible even for sinful men and women to enter into communion. How can it be otherwise when He seeks me, after this fashion, morning, noon and night? "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man will open the door I will come in to him and sup with him and he with me."

(2) The other great barrier between man and God to which I have referred is that caused by the insignificance of man and the greatness of God. To-day that barrier seems far higher than it used to be. Undoubtedly the only God in whom it is possible for an educated man or woman to believe is a very great God. Science has given us quite new conceptions of the magnitude and wonder of the universe, and this seems not only to have enhanced the greatness of its Creator, but has dwarfed the importance of man. The gulf between creature and Creator has never seemed so great or so hard to cross, and this has not only made it more difficult for man to hold communion with God, but to many it seems impossible to believe

that God could ever become man. Faith has endeavoured to bridge that gulf by dwelling on the difference in quality between man and Nature. It has followed the line of Pascal in his famous simile of the "thinking reed" which is greater in kind than the mighty universe which cannot think. I believe that to be a sound and true argument, and have followed it out in the earlier lectures of this volume. But I would follow another line of thought here in the completion of that argument, and try in thought to approach the gulf from the other side. What is the reasoning which leads to the conclusion that it is less possible to believe in the Incarnation because of our new knowledge of the greatness of God? There is surely something unsound about the argument that because we must own that God is a far mightier and wiser being than men used to think Him, therefore He must be more commonplace in His moral character. The only God that it is possible to believe in to-day, or that is worth believing in, is, as I have said, He who combines supreme power and reality with moral perfection. But Jesus Christ has made it impossible for us to conceive of moral perfection save in terms of pure and holy love. But love in its very nature always implies service and sacrifice. Take these out of it and you destroy it.

Is not love always creative? Love of beauty leads to the creation of every beautiful thing. The love of truth creates discovery and knowledge. Human love, desiring more love, creates the family, and is always seeking the fuller perfection of being of those whom it loves. If that be so, then surely in the Cross and Passion of our Lord we have

revealed the very mainspring of all creation, "the love which moves the sun and all the stars." Thus the Cross is not departing in the light of modern knowledge, it is coming back again! It is able to hold its own not only with "Orion and the Pleiades and the Bear," but with the whole galactic universe, with the abysses of time disclosed by geological science and with all the amazing world of animate Nature. Even as these are divine splendours in the world of Nature, so this is a divine splendour in the world of the soul. The new knowledge gives it a better frame.

The truth is that the intimidation which many in our day feel at the terrifying vastness of the universe is an instinctive rather than a reasoned mood. If we yield to it—and who among us has not felt its force?—we must abandon not only faith in the Incarnation, but faith in the worth and importance of humanity and in any deep distinction between bulk and quality of being, between things material and things spiritual. It leads straight to ultimate negation, therefore, of all that is finest and best in human life, for unquestionably the salt of civilisation lies in our conviction of the sacredness of human personality over against mere brute magnitude and power. The whole of the earlier argument of this book turned on whether the world were fundamentally material or spiritual. If that argument were sound there is no reason for spiritual beings to be intimidated by the sheer vastness of the physical universe, for all things material are of a lower kind in worth than what is spiritual.

But if God has thus in His greatness and sovereign grace approached all men in Christ, and has made,

and is still making, all the advances to us, who are we that we should say Him "nay"? "All our communion with God rests upon His communion with us." All is of His grace revealed in the Incarnation and Atoning Passion of His Son. That is the basal truth of the New Testament revelation.

III

Is that, then, a complete account of the substance of the Christian faith in God? Whatever we may feel about that to-day, it seems clear to me that the New Testament age would certainly have said that it was not. That is sufficiently obvious from the place which the Holy Spirit has in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles and the Apocalypse.

In these writings generally, the Spirit is thought of not as a subjective condition of the human mind, but as a Divine Influence producing such thoughts and emotions and volitions of men as are like the "mind of Christ." It is a Divine Power rather than a human state. In the Synoptic Gospels it is spoken of as enabling Christ to do His great deeds. But it is not confined to these. All the Synoptic Evangelists begin their story of the active ministry of Jesus with His baptism by the Spirit. Then follows the history of the unique life, death and resurrection. The underlying idea is obviously that its wonder is all due to its unique possession by the Spirit of God. God Himself is fashioning this life of beauty and wonder, sustaining and guiding this man on this new plane of character and blessing, as He moves among His fellow-men.

By the continued reception of this Spirit He lives and works, and this highest endowment is meant not only for Himself, but for all who will follow Him. Anyone according to his human measure may have it from God who will!

When we pass from the Synoptic Gospels to the Acts we find at the very beginning the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost taking the same determining place as the Baptism by the Jordan takes in the Gospels. In the former case it is as if the writers said, "This is what the Spirit enabled this man to be." In the latter case, it is as if the author said, "This is what baptism by the Spirit enabled the Church to be." In strict conformity with this idea throughout the whole of the Acts we find the Spirit leading and guiding and empowering the Church and its members, as "the new race" enters into its inheritance and the Gospel moves on from Jerusalem to Antioch and Rome.

The Spirit is prominent in nearly all the New Testament writings, but it is not too much to say that the Pauline Epistles in particular are permeated throughout by the thought of the Spirit. Short as they are the Spirit is referred to in them about 120 times. In the Fourth Gospel, which comes at the end of the apostolic period, we find, in our Lord's farewell discourse, the promise that the "Comforter" or Holy Spirit will be given, as the climax to which all the rest leads up. That Comforter will convince the world of sin and righteousness and judgment, and He will illuminate for the disciples all that the Son has said to them. He will not only call to their remembrance all that He has said and interpret it, but He will add to

the things that He did say things that He did not say because they were not ready for them. Of such supreme value will the coming of the Spirit be to them that it is well worth while that they should lose His human presence that the Spirit may come instead. That surely is a remarkable proof of the worth of the Spirit in the first Christian age. It is the positive estimate of that worth, as the declaration that the sin against the Holy Spirit is the supreme sin is the measure of its loss.

Such then is the New Testament belief in the Holy Spirit. The Modernist theology, which is most deeply influenced by continental thought, makes little or no use of it in its endeavour to restate the Christian faith. Its two greatest representatives in Germany, Schleiermacher and Ritschl, reduce it to that knowledge of God which has been given to us by the Jesus of history and is maintained in the Church or community of Jesus, and transmitted by Christian education and example to each generation. When anyone fully and consciously appropriates it or reaches some deeper understanding of it he receives the Spirit of God, for he knows the truth and the truth sets him free. But the divine action is reduced to the giving of the revelation at the first. There is no ever-living Spirit of God contemporary, as it were, with every generation, and continually creative in the world, intervening in crises of the human soul and sustaining the new life in each disciple, such as is quite obviously believed in by all the New Testament writers. Now it is possible to use a good deal of New Testament language about the Holy

Spirit on this reduced view, for it does represent a real though partial truth. The Spirit, as it were, does dwell in the Word, so that he who will honestly receive the Word into his heart cannot but receive the Spirit with it. Yet to confine the Spirit to the effect of the Gospel on the mind of men, that is to say, to reduce it from a creative power of God to a state of the human consciousness, represents a great reduction of the New Testament conception for the simple reason that it greatly reduces the activity of God in the life of man, and that is surely to banish from human life much of its power and hope. Can we afford to lose it at any time—above all, can we afford to lose it to-day? I can imagine a man, compelled by the force of evidence or by some supposed inherent contradiction in his faith, sorrowfully abandoning belief in the Holy Spirit as something too good to be true, and turning to the dull prose of reality again to take up his burden because he must. But before he does this, I think he is bound to ask what are the compelling reasons which are believed to be valid for that renunciation. When we thus examine these reasons I think that they are four in number.

(1) The first is purely practical. We are repelled by extravagances of the weaker forms of evangelism, or the cruder forms of sacramentarianism, displayed in connection with their faith in the Holy Spirit. The one may confound certain plainly neurotic crises with the creative work of the Spirit of God and live in what we feel to be a pathological world, and the other may materialise and narrow the gift of the Spirit of the Living Christ out of all recognition. But that a great truth may be abused is

no valid reason for its rejection. Revulsion from extravagance may lead to extravagant moderation. "You pretend to extraordinary manifestations and gifts of the Holy Ghost. That is a very horrid thing!" said the Bishop of Bristol to John Wesley. These were two of the noblest men of their time, for though, for some unknown reason, Wesley's standard biographer, Tyerman, conceals the fact, the Bishop of Bristol of that day was none other than Joseph Butler himself, soon to be the author of the famous *Analogy*, while Wesley was then at the beginning of the greatest spiritual movement in England since the Reformation. The incident is a sharp reminder of the dangers of mere recoil. But it would be unfair to attribute that reduction of faith in the Spirit of God which prevails in our time to this alone. There are more deeply considered reasons.

(2) The first of these is the closed system idea of Nature. Modernism is an endeavour to restate the Gospel in terms of modern thought, and modern thought is deeply imbued with the working theory of science that the natural world is a closed system in which everything that happens can be fully explained, without going outside that system to seek for further grounds of explanation. I have already dealt with the conception in its most trenchant form of Naturalism. Modernism, of course, repudiates Naturalism, but has been deeply tinged by the Idealistic philosophy of the age, which, as Professor Whitehead has said, "swallowed the scientific scheme in its entirety as being the only rendering of the facts of Nature, and has thus explained it as being an idea in the ultimate

mentality.” That is to say, the prevalent Idealism of the nineteenth century in effect said to the science of the day: “What you say about Nature is true so far as it goes, but it is only relative truth. The whole truth is that God or the Absolute is immanent in Nature, manifesting and realising Himself in the orderly course of the closed system. We leave you that closed system of Nature. It is your way of looking at it, convenient for your own purposes, and we do not ask you to change it, provided that you admit that Nature exists for Spirit, as a means to its realising of spiritual ends and that your account is set in this larger whole of the Immanent Spirit.” In practice this vague concordat meant that the idealist philosopher, as a rule, discarded any such emergence from the heavenly world as the New Testament records, while the scientists in the main disregarded the idealist philosopher. For both alike the river of human history found its way to the sea, but there were no great tides from that ocean moving up the river, bringing depth and peace and majesty into its shrunken waters. To-day there is no disguising the fact that the semi-pantheistic system of Absolute Idealism no longer meets the deepest religious needs of our age, and it is also perfectly clear that it is not the faith of either Jesus Christ or the New Testament age. The faith of both is in a Father who is not only immanent in Nature and history, but transcendent and creative, and who freely moulds both, creating and regenerating human spirits in the fullest sense of the term. It is clear that we have here a faith that passes beyond what either Deism or mere Idealism of the religious

type can allow. To them the whole New Testament conception of a continuous interweaving of the powers of a heavenly world with this earthly world must be alien, for the full New Testament conception of the Spirit implies a world in which miracles of answered prayer, "guidances" by the Spirit of God, regeneration of the human spirit, and sustained reinforcement of the higher life are everyday experiences of the Christian community, and it seems impossible to reconcile these with "continuity," in other words, with the closed system of Nature or of history as viewed by the ordinary historian. The full New Testament idea of the Spirit inevitably carries with it "supernaturalism," and to this many minds, even to-day, are closed. In earlier lectures I have shown to what mutilation and distortions of fundamental moral and æsthetic values this obsession of the closed system leads, and have also endeavoured to show where the fallacy lies, and also that the most modern forms of philosophy are chafing under its restraints and breaking away from it in theories of "emergence" and "creative" evolution, and so I shall not retrace the general argument. But it is in place here to show that this obsession produces the same mutilation and distortion in the religion of the New Testament as it does when applied to the moral convictions and æsthetic values of the life of man.

When we turn from the life and death of Christ to the story of the founding of the Church and to Christian history since then we find the same mutilation. Either the story in the New Testament is true or it is not true. If it is true we

have an event of transcendent moment for the human race. If it is true, what are the facts? The life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, as it were, broke a great barrier that had risen up between the life of God and the life of man, and the floods of that divine life poured through. The creative Spirit of God came to mankind to complete the story of the creation of the heavens and the earth, and to change and regenerate the wandering race of men. We have here, according to the apostolic teaching, the climax of the Gospel history, the end for which Christ had come, and towards which He had been labouring and praying and healing and dying and rising again. The open secret of the New Testament experience is that these first believers believed that through the coming of this heavenly Power they were enabled to be in living communion with Christ still, so that not only they could speak to Him but, what was far more sensational, He could speak with them and they could be sure that it was He who spoke. It is only in the light of this belief that we can understand the rapid multiplication of the churches all round the Levantine coast lands, and through Greece to Rome. These were all, I take it, meant to be reproductions of the first circle of disciples with Christ still in the heart of each new community through His Spirit, and wherever they came life lost its commonplaceness, its tragedy and fear, its taint of sin and decay: new warmth and hope came into it, and a "new race," as they called themselves, came into being. The Book of the Acts is perhaps the most exhilarating book in the Bible, as that book ought to be which tells of

the coming of the "Lord and Giver of Life" to mankind.

Now let us see what the "closed system" idea makes of all this. Over all rationalism writes the word "illusion." What had really happened was not the coming of God's spirit at all. It was simply an *émeute* of man's own subconscious mind in futile rebellion against the unchanging order of Nature: instead of being the climax it is the anti-climax. First came the Resurrection apparitions, and then at Pentecost another emotional cyclone which, strange to say, was the prelude to what, by universal consent, was an unprecedented awakening not only of religious faith but of moral power. Out of this fever marsh of neurotic extravagance there sprang the deep and pure river of the Christian life. We must of course apply the same interpretation to all supposed manifestations of the power of the Holy Spirit all down through the Christian ages. This applies not only to supernormal events such as visions and healings and so forth, but to all "conversions" and "guidances" and apparent answers to prayer, by which strength to overcome temptation seemed to be given by God Himself. We have, that is to say, to dismiss from our thoughts of Christian experience in general any thought of a creative and sustaining intervention of the Spirit of God. The whole conception of God as causally active in the experience of man must be narrowed down to the historical period of Jesus of Nazareth, and to the educative influence of the Divine Providence which we experience as we pursue our way through the joys and sorrows of our human life. All the rest we do ourselves by putting forth faith and

practising duty, or else projecting from our subconsciousness on the screen of our conscious life. There is no Holy Spirit save as a state of the human mind. It is hardly necessary to point out how greatly this impoverishes the whole Christian conception of God, and how much barer it makes our human outlook upon the world. What has to be said upon this point must be reserved, however, until we have considered the third of the influences which in our day have tended towards this reduction of the New Testament teaching of the Holy Spirit.

(3) Yet another reason given by Liberal theology for the minimising of the Holy Spirit is that to admit such a transcendent divine influence working within the consciousness of man is to degrade the freedom of human personality, to consider man as a thing rather than a person. Personalities may be influenced profoundly by persuasion and reasoning and example, but to think even of God influencing them by His Spirit other than in this way would be an "impersonal" and "non-ethical" invasion of man's ethical freedom. You make the Spirit a force, it is said. But is not a force lower in the scale of being than an intelligence? To say, then, that the Spirit regenerates is to degrade the being who is "converted." Surely this is to take too narrow a view of the whole situation.

In the first place it is only too plain that human beings are not pure intelligences at all. A very large number of them are infants or children, or immature in development, and even when they are adult they are the prey of impulses that are anything but rational. Modern psychology has made it plain to how large an extent the will or "conation"

enters into all our thinking, and how, even in the highest ranges of the mind's working, its outlook is profoundly influenced by the infirmities or vices of the flesh and spirit. No human being is a mere thinking machine. The influences that arise from the subconscious regions even in the mind of the wisest philosopher pondering over the deepest mysteries are many and subtle. Now are we to say that this subconscious mind of man is impervious to any influence from the supraconscious universe, otherwise than through man's conscious appropriation of the truth? It is surely quite clear that this cannot be proved. If such intervention existed, far from degrading man it would, it seems to me, be the best of good news. For surely it would bring with it a new possibility of setting his reason free from a bondage that he knows to be a degradation.

Again, to say that to think of the Spirit of God as an "influence" is to make it a natural "force" is, for another reason, quite beside the mark. It has to be remembered that in the Bible the Spirit of God is always thought of as the creative source of the universe, not only of Nature, but of the entire range of human life. The Spirit is God in creative action creating the first chaos, brooding over it, and bringing out of it order and life, creating man in His own image, and when he wanders, restoring his soul. Not only the natural but the higher life in man is the work of the Divine Ruach or Spirit. Man's reason itself, then, is God's creation. But if the Spirit creates the reason why should it not renew and strengthen it? I entirely fail to see why if God can create a human being, and if that

should be a glorious thing, it should be considered a degradation to such a being that God should re-create him when he has ruined himself. The rationalist's way of thinking here seems to me to be quite divorced from reality.

(4) The final difficulty is certainly more serious, as it is certainly far older than any of those we have been considering above. Why, it is said, if God has this power of regenerating the human spirit in His hands, does He not use it more freely for the salvation of all? The answer to this ancient difficulty has been already implied in a preceding lecture. I believe that in creating free human spirits God has in the full sense of the term limited Himself. It is entirely possible to hold that the Divine Spirit can come to the help of the human, can regenerate and daily reinforce the spiritual life of man, and yet to believe that He has made that conditional on the free consent of that soul. "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any man will open the door I will come in to him and sup with him and he with me." To take that strain of thought out of the Bible or to fail to give it due force is certainly to tamper with the substance of the faith.

None, then, of the difficulties of Humanitarianism seem to me of any real substance or to give any reason for that reduction of the Spirit of God to a state of the human consciousness which has been so frequent in its version of Christianity. They seem to me to start from a one-sided conception of the Christian life as essentially a moral struggle, of which conception it is hardly a caricature to say that the soul says to God, "Let me alone! Let

me do it all by myself!" and, jealous of its own dignity as a personality, fights its own way through and thinks its own way out, in independence of the succouring and revealing Spirit of God. One is inclined to ask: "Supposing it did succeed would it not be a very complacent and finite little spirit that emerged from its long battle, a Stoic rather than a Christian soul, with all the limitations of the Stoic type, self-centred rather than God-centred and intolerant of weaker failures?"

As I read the New Testament the new nature in man is not fashioned by man himself, but by God, and man's chief concern is not to make himself in jealous independence of God, but to cease from hindering God from making of him what He will. God is, as it were, in action all the time, transforming men and women into the likeness of His Son, by the moulding influence of His Providence without and the "inspiration" of His Spirit from within. In other words the new man does not create himself: God creates him. "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God before prepared that we should walk in them." The metaphors here are mixed, but the thought is clear. The course is marked out, and the destined work prepared for us. That is God's Providence without us. The Spirit creates in us the new ideals, and gives us power to translate them into realities, and the Christian life is thus at every point not one of jealous independence lest God should help us too much, and so spoil our individuality, but one of habitual reliance on God's Providence and His Spirit. We cannot have too much surely of God, if He be truly the "First and only Fair."

Our whole danger lies in having too little of Him. This is certainly the Pauline conception of the Christian life, and I cannot see that there is any difference in the other apostolic writers, though the thought is most clearly formulated by Paul. The distortion of which I have spoken thus affects the whole conception of the Christian life. In the last resort it affects also the whole Christian idea of God. The full Christian idea of God, as we have already seen, is not that He is One who waits till men shall find Him out, but of One who comes, and who seeks and saves the lost. The fundamental religious weakness of rationalism is, as we have seen, that it denatures this forthcomingness of the grace of God Himself in the Incarnation and Passion. These become merely noble human achievements of the ideal man.

It is congruous with this that the conception of the Spirit should be reduced as well as the conception of the Son, and all the supposed phenomena of the spiritual life should become manifestations not of the power of God, but upheavals of the subconscious life of man. Conversely, if we believe in a true Incarnation of the Son, we must give its full New Testament meaning to the Spirit. Consider the position. God sends His Son to the world to be to each man a Revealer, Saviour and Lord, offering to every human being, through all future ages, the forgiveness of sins, and summoning them all to give themselves to Him as He has given Himself to them. But this message is embodied in the historical personality of Jesus Christ, His life, death and resurrection. Now for the contemporaries of Jesus Christ who had known

Him that personal manifestation might come with overwhelming force as if eternity had suddenly opened its heart to them. But can that experience be indefinitely repeated in all future ages and lands? The personality of Jesus is bound up with the period in history to which He belongs. To make Him real and vivid to ourselves to-day requires, as we know, a very real effort, for we have to transport ourselves back in imagination nearly two thousand years to re-create the environment and to translate the teaching into the terms of the life of our own age. What will men have to do in twenty thousand years or in a hundred thousand, if the world should last so long? The resistless flood of time is bearing us ever farther away from Calvary. Must not the image of Him who died on the Cross grow ever fainter and fainter as the distance increases, until He becomes only a faintly shining name like that of Isaiah of Jerusalem or some other of "the world's grey fathers"? History is a story of endless change, and the mere time process must wear down the finality and absoluteness of His historic manifestation.¹ Ten thousand years hence men may say

¹ That the prophetic religions greatly excel Nature religions in vividness and moral force history shows. But that they are apt to succumb to the time sequence and become transformed by it into something different the story of Buddhism, in particular, shows, where what is usually known to-day as Buddhism would hardly be recognised by its founder.

Mrs Rhys Davids has recorded an interview with a young Buddhist, which brings out with pathetic force the need for some living interpreter of a historical revelation.

"Many are now, I hear, speaking of him (*i.e.* the Buddha) as not above all one of the great Devas or gods, but as a man who may still be alive. Will the earth ever see another like him? We believe it will. Do you think there will be another Jesus? I wish there were a Maitreya (*i.e.* another Buddha) here now! I get weary of being told there is no way of getting word from him, to tell us much we want to know. . . . Sometimes, too, I think we want a helper who, when he leaves the earth

of our age: "Yes, it was still possible then to think of Jesus of Nazareth as Saviour and Lord, but to-day He is too far off and faint a figure for it to be possible for us." Roman Christianity has tried to bridge this gulf of time by the Church, but surely the Church alone cannot do it. The Church consists of fallible men like ourselves, and history shows that aggregates of men are too often less wise than the best individuals among them. The Roman Church, in fact, which claims infallibility claims it by virtue of its supposed peculiar gift of the Holy Spirit.

Surely what is needed if the Incarnation is to be for all peoples and all time is some new power of God Himself which can make the Jesus of history the eternal contemporary of every human soul. The gift of the Son would be incomplete without the gift of the Spirit. It is to me, therefore, inconceivable that Easter should have had no following Pentecost, inconceivable, that is to say, on the full Christian idea of God. We need the fulness of the New Testament idea of God, a divine initiative of the Father begun in the Son and continued and

will not let go of us. Perhaps it is not orthodox, do you call it? . . . Perhaps our Buddha did not want man to let him go into such utter blankness when he left the earth. . . . Christians tell me they can get near Jesus in the sacrament. But to me that seems just a matter of the body. They tell me also of a 'holy spirit' who will be our guide in what should be done, and that is a lovely idea. But I seem to want a helper who will give me more light just where the monks, as I was saying, do not. Our Buddha spoke of the good life as a way, and the monks teach it as an earth way—that is, how rightly to walk in this life. But then life, they say, is very, very long; and beyond this little bit of it we have no good way. We are in the dark. Don't you think the perfect teacher, the helper greater than the gods, would be always helping man—at least till they would themselves see with him the end of the long way approaching?"

(Account of an interview with a young Sinhalese Buddhist quoted in *Reports of Jerusalem Missionary Conference, 1928, vol. i, pp. 143-44.*)

pressed through by the coming and abiding of the Holy Spirit.

If we are to enter fully into the New Testament thought we have to think of this Spirit as being given by God not by fits and starts, now given and now withdrawn. Like God's Providence, rather, the Spirit is always there waiting for men to realise it. All the fluctuation in receptivity is in man, not necessarily only in the individual man, but in the social medium in which he lives as well as in himself, and man's supreme concern is to cease, and to persuade others to cease, from hindering the steady divine initiative of the Spirit of God.

We may put the matter in a figure and reinforce it by a passage from one of the great mystics. As the reader reads these words the North Sea is breaking on the dykes of Holland. All along these mighty ramparts incessant watch is being kept lest at any point they show signs of giving way before that relentless siege, and letting in the destroying waters to drown populous cities and quiet homesteads and to poison the fertile land. If we invert the figure we may have some conception of the New Testament thought of the Holy Spirit of God. Instead of a sea of death imagine a sea of life beating on the ramparts of human unbelief and selfishness, lust and pride, seeking to bring life and joy and beauty to the sinful spirits of men. Surely this is the conception of God that is alone consistent with the Incarnation. Without it the Incarnation is a broken fragment. The Spirit is the same initiative pressed through and continued from age to age in order to make that first initiative effectual and independent of historic time

and change. Let us hear Meister Eckhart on that revelation: "God is bound to act, to pour Himself out into thee as soon as He shall find thee ready. Think not it is with God as a human carpenter, who works or works not as he chooses, who can do or leave undone at his good pleasure. It is not so with God, but finding thee ready, He is obliged to act to overflow into thee; just as the sun must needs burst forth when the air is bright and clear, and is unable to contain itself. . . . Thou needst not seek Him here or there. He is not farther off than at the door of thine heart; there He stands lingering, awaiting whoever is ready to open the door and let Him in. Thou needst not call to Him afar. He waits much more impatiently than thou for thee to open to Him."¹

Can the world in these days dispense with the early faith that, given receptivity in the heart of man, there is no limit to the succour that can come to him from the Unseen? Why should we give up the faith that God still works mightily in the lives of men, still guides them in their perplexities by His Spirit, still from the inexhaustible springs of His grace regenerates and inspires their lives and reveals new depths in His gift of His Son? The truth is that never did the world need more the promise of the Spirit than it does to-day.

We have now completed our long argument which started from the fundamental riddle which faces every human being who is born into the world and who will face its experiences with courage and honesty, and we have endeavoured to

¹ Meister Eckhart, Sermon 4. Quoted in the anthology *The Heavenly Vision*. Published by Student Christian Movement Press.

set forth the solution in the full Christian revelation of God. That the answer still leaves mysteries unexplained we have no reason to deny, for, I repeat, it is unreasonable to expect that human beings so undeveloped and sinful as we are should have a complete solution. But we have light enough to be sure that a very great Wisdom and Power and Love is over all things, and to look forward with confident hope that the end will justify every step of the long road.

APPENDIX A TO CHAPTER IV

BY much the best recent review known to me, of the matters contained in this chapter, is that in Professor John Baillie's volume on *The Interpretation of Religion*, pp. 256-380, where the argument is traced in masterly fashion from Kant through Fichte, Lotze, Ritschl and Herrmann. I have found Professor Baillie's own analysis of the implications of moral obligation in this volume and, in more summary form, in his inaugural address on induction to the chair of Theology in Union Seminary,¹ New York, very illuminating, and am much indebted to them in the statement given in the text. I agree with him as to the central importance of the moral consciousness in any reasoned modern statement of Theism, and accept his definition of elementary faith as a "moral trust in Reality," but think there is more in the religious consciousness than can be contained within the moral awareness of the Divine. We have to take full account of man's intuitive trust in the gods whom he has worshipped, as well as of his sense of obligation and responsibility to them.

¹ Published in brochure form.

APPENDIX B TO CHAPTER VII

THE whole type of argument for the spiritual and purposive character of the world developed in the earlier part of this volume is so radically countered by Professor Barth, the most prominent representative of the Dialectical school of theology, that some reference to that theology seemed necessary in the text.

Except, however, to those who are acquainted with the peculiar situation in Germany, Barth's criticisms of "natural theology" are hardly intelligible to readers in this country. When we think of "natural theology" in English-speaking lands we think of the inferences which must be drawn from the physical character of the natural world, or, to use the term less appropriately, of the implications of universal moral human experience.

But in Germany to-day there has suddenly arisen a "natural religion" and a "natural theology" of a different type, which believes that it finds a true revelation of God in the national genius and history of the Germanic races, and which seeks to accommodate the revelation of God in Christ to this other revelation. Owing to historical accidents this racial mysticism has been able to gain a dominant political and educational position, and has put all the Christian Churches in a position of acute danger.

The Dialectical theology which is in the main to be understood as a vehement *émeute* against the secularising tendencies of modern thought which have for long been tending to reduce the Biblical revelation from its claim to absoluteness and finality, has found its most prominent spokesman in Karl Barth. He has, however, taken up so extreme a position in opposition to this racial mysticism that the Dialectical theologians can no longer be regarded as a united school, his friend and former ally, Emil Brunner of Zurich, being now one of his sharpest critics.

Barth repudiates altogether every form of "natural theology," holding that sin has destroyed the image of God in man, and so prevented man from gaining any real knowledge of God either from His works in Nature, or His voice in conscience. Nor can there be any real knowledge of God apart from the Bible revelation in any human being. The saints and prophets of heathendom, Socrates, Gautama, Plato, were unvisited by any revelation of Him or His message. Nor can the true missionary recognise any real point of contact in the noblest representative of heathen religion to whom he comes. As there is in such a man no real knowledge of God there can be no real point of contact.

It is much easier to understand how in the heart of a great struggle with a threatened national apostasy from Christian faith a prophetic spirit like Barth's should have reached such a position, than to justify it. There does not seem to be any adequate ground for it in Scripture, and it is plainly against the Logos teaching of the Johannine

writings. The prevailing tone of the New Testament missionaries seems to be expressed in the Pauline saying, "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." Much of our weightiest and most efficient modern missionary testimony is against it, and would rather sympathise with the saying of a very successful and much honoured missionary, "I never yet preached the Gospel to a heathen audience but I found that the Spirit of God had been there before me."

It surely gives a most dreary view of human history that in all the countless ages before the Old Testament revelation began, and in all the immense populations of the unevangelised world, the Universal Father never spoke to anyone of the ruined human race and showed him something of Himself. Finally, if the Divine Image is utterly destroyed in every unconverted human being, does not Bishop Talbot's penetrating question (footnote, page 181) go to the very heart of the matter? Can any true and final revelation be recognised as such that does not corroborate something that is there before? Can there be revelation that is not corroboration? If we have no glimmerings within us of the knowledge of God, how can we recognise His Son as the fulness of His glory? Can the Divine Image in man really be destroyed without the destruction of the essential personality? To answer these questions rightly will carry us far into the real meaning both of Faith and Resolution.

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